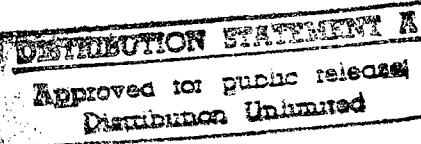


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MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 4, April 1989

Early Policies on Command Cadres Discussed
00010010a VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 4, Apr 89 (signed to press 28 Mar 89)
pp 14- 21

[Article, published under the heading "The CPSU and Military Questions," by A.F. Danilevskiy, doctor of historical sciences and professor: "A Firm Line (The Eighth RKP(b) Congress on Military Organizational Development)"]

[Text] In carrying out the immortal ideas of V.I. Lenin on the defense of the motherland, the Communist Party effected enormous work to create and strengthen the Armed Forces of the Soviet Republic. Military questions were frequently discussed at the party congresses, Central Committee plenums and sessions. This was dictated by the tasks of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and the military defense of the young socialist state.

The Eighth RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Congress made an inestimable contribution to the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces. This congress was held on 18-23 March 1919 and here the "military opposition" was defeated, it being persuasively shown that its platform was theoretically invalid. The Congress adopted the solely correct resolution under those conditions for the military question. This document which generalized over a year's experience gained by the Red Army in the fight against the interventionists and White Guards formulated the bases of military policy for the Communist Party and outlined practical measures to strengthen the Red Army as a class and regular army.

One of the most difficult questions which had to be settled in the process of establishing a regular army was the question of command personnel. This was no accident. As a rule, the old army was headed by representatives of the exploiting classes indoctrinated in a spirit of defending the interests of the bourgeoisie and with a good knowledge of their job. In considering that the command personnel of the Red Army was to basically consist of workers and peasants, Lenin at the same time constantly emphasized the importance of involving military specialists ready to serve the people honestly.

The leader of the world's first proletarian state repeatedly pointed out that the question of specialists was extremely acute and it involved all sectors of the national economy. It was impossible to build a new socialist society without using the bourgeois specialists and without learning from them. "Our task," he said, "by experience is to win over large numbers of specialists, to

replace them, training new command personnel and a new range of specialists who must learn the extremely difficult, new and complex question of command and control."¹

This important question was repeatedly discussed at a meeting of military workers and at the party Central Committee. The solution to it required a profound understanding not only of the general tasks related to the natural development of the socialist state but also to the essence of military problems.

In March 1918, a meeting was held in the Kremlin for the military workers. According to the evidence of A.F. Myasnikov, over a period of several hours there was a dispute concerning the organization of the army and the tasks of the army communists. The question of the military specialists aroused particularly stormy debate. A predominant majority of the participants was against using them.² Lenin listened closely to the speakers, he made replies and then himself spoke. He said that in order to master military knowledge, it was essential to learn from the military specialists.

After the speech by Vladimir Ilich, the conference participants began to propose a resolution against the use of military specialists. Then Lenin, in the words of A.F. Myasnikov, stood up and said: "... You have asked for us to hear you out, we have listened to you, we are very grateful for the information, and now permit us, the party Central Committee, to hand down a decision on the given question, having used, certainly, both your experience and your advice."³

The party Central Committee took the firm decision to use the military specialists and old regular officers in organizing the Red Army.

Many former generals and officers from the old army, entering the ranks of the Red Army, served Soviet power honestly. From their midst came prominent military leaders and commanders. However, there were some military specialists who did endeavor to undermine the combat might of our army.

V.I. Lenin took an active part in selecting and placing the old military command personnel, he had an ideological impact on them, he gave them the necessary aid and was interested in how they were performing their duties. "We, the old military specialists," wrote the former general of the Tsarist Army, M.D. Bonch-Bruyevich, "are obliged to Lenin more than to anyone else for the fact that from the very first days of the revolution they shared the difficult and thorny path with the people."⁴

Lenin's policy of establishing a regular army and making the greatest possible use of the bourgeois specialists evoked strong resistance from the "leftist communists." Some of them asserted that we did not need a regular army and that a regular army and a revolutionary war were concepts that were mutually exclusive.

As for Lev Trotsky and his few supporters, they had gone to the other extreme and had begun to admire the military specialists and ignore political control over them by the party organizations and military commissars. Trotsky, in particular, endeavored to institute a procedure whereby the military specialists would be protected against any supervision.

The party Central Committee repeatedly pointed out that the use of the military specialists was possible only under the condition of unceasing supervision of them. Thus, the Central Committee Plenum held on 25 October 1918 repudiated the importuning of Trotsky who intended to free all the hostage officers from arrest. The plenum stated that "only those officers who have not belonged to a counterrevolutionary movement are to be released."⁵

It must be pointed out that I.V. Stalin assumed an incorrect position during the period of organizing centralized troop command and utilizing military specialists. Being a member of the Revolutionary Military Council (RVS) of the Southern Front, he together with K.Ye. Voroshilov and S.K. Minin (they were also members of the front's military council) without any grounds voiced mistrust of the front's commander, P.P. Sytin, argued for a collective decision of operational questions and wrongly felt that the only task of the Southern Front was the defense of Tsaritsyn.⁶

On 27 September 1918, a letter was dispatched to the RVSR [Republic Revolutionary Military Council] and which had been signed by Stalin, Voroshilov and Minin. It stated that "the commander...Sytin in a strange manner is not interested in the situation of the front as a whole (if one does not count the Povorinskiy section) and clearly is not taking or is incapable of taking measures to improve the northern sectors of the Southern Front. Moreover, to our request twice on the state of the northern sectors he has still not replied a single word not to mention that he is clearly completely unconcerned by his isolation from the southern sectors of the front."⁷

On the following day after the dispatch of this letter in Tsaritsyn in the building of the staff of the Northern Caucasus Military District, the first session was held of the Southern Front RVS and this was attended by Stalin, Minin, Voroshilov and Sytin as well as the RVSR member K.A. Mekhonoshin. The session discussed the questions of splitting the Southern Front into armies, organizing military councils and staffs of the armies as well as the location of the front's RVS. In discussing these, serious differences of opinion arose with Sytin who, proceeding from the instructions given him, demanded that the RVS cease interfering into operational affairs. Due to the fundamental differences of the RVS with the commander of the Southern Front and the ignoring by its members of the decrees of the RVSR concerning the rights of the front commander, Sytin was forced to move that the sessions be halted.

On 1 October 1918, the RVSR member K.A. Mekhonoshin reported the following to the RVSR: "...Comrades Stalin, Minin and Voroshilov are proposing as most suitable at the given moment a collective form of command of the front and a collective solution to all operational questions. The explanations by myself and the front commander Sytin that without even being involved on the essence of the question the order of the RVSR should be carried out did not lead to the desired results. I propose that before the explanation they should immediately begin to work according to the orders. At the same time, without halting work, a report should be submitted to the RVSR and in the event of a difference of opinion with it to the SNK [Council of People's Commissars]. My proposal was rejected.

"In taking into account that each day of delay in forming a unifying front of the center has the most lethal effect on the military situation on such a serious combat sector where our setbacks are explained chiefly by the absence of the RVS, I feel it essential to take the most energetic measures to resolve this question in one way or another."⁸

In the meanwhile, in ignoring the instructions of the RVSR and without waiting for explanations from it, Stalin, Voroshilov and Minin demanded that Sytin be removed from the post of commander of the Southern Front. The Communist Party always decisively stopped a lack of discipline and insubordination to superior bodies. For this reason, the conflict on the Southern Front RVS was discussed at a session of the party Central Committee on 2 October 1918. The session adopted the proposal of Ya.M. Sverdlov: "To call Comrade Stalin over the direct line and point out to him that obedience to the RVS is absolutely essential."⁹

However, the Central Committee instructions did not have the proper effect on Stalin, Minin and Voroshilov. In learning from the telegram of Ya.M. Sverdlov that the conflict in the Southern Front RVS had been discussed in the party Central Committee and that their position had not been confirmed, they wrote a letter to Lenin in which they endeavored to show that the RVSR had put the Southern Front into the hands "of a man not only not necessary on the front, but also one who has not merited trust and for this reason is harmful,"¹⁰ and also demanded "a review of the question about military specialists from the camp of nonparty counterrevolutionaries."¹¹ Certainly, the Central Committee and I.V. Stalin could not agree with their demand. For this reason on 6 October 1918, I.V. Stalin was summoned to Moscow. In a conversation with him, Vladimir Illich Lenin condemned the arbitrary actions by the Southern Front RVS members who had shown disobedience to the superior bodies.

Not agreeing with the criticism of his erroneous position, Stalin wrote a request for removing him from the post of the RVSR and the Southern Front RVS. On 9 October 1918, he informed the RVSR that he considered himself "removed from the membership of the Southern Front RVS."¹²

On 11 October 1918, in a telegram to Ya.M. Sverdlov, I.V. Stalin again endeavored to accuse P.P. Sytin of poor leadership of the Southern Front asserting that "someone's adroit hand is endeavoring to thwart the supply of the front and finish off Tsaritsyn." At the same time, he expressed regret that he "had submitted a request to leave both councils."¹³

Ya.M. Sverdlov was acquainted with the situation on the Southern Front and was inclined to put the blame for poor supply of the Tsaritsyn sector on the front commander. On 11 October 1918, he telegraphed the people's commissar for military and naval affairs: "I have just received Stalin's information on nonreceipt up to now of any supplies [in] conversations with Kozlov it turned out that the shipments there had not been halted, insist on need to immediately investigate reasons for hold-up, and all guilty parties held strictly responsible. Take all measures to immediately dispatch required supplies. Inform me subsequently."¹⁴

But after this, Stalin felt that all the blame for poor supply of the 10th Army rested on Sytin. In a letter to the Central Committee, he demanded "the commander of the Southern Front and the military council members of the Southern Front be brought before the court." The Plenum of the RKP(b) Central Committee held on 25 October 1918 turned down this demand of Stalin.

Thus, the affairs of the Southern Front RVS show in what a difficult situation V.I. Lenin had to direct national defense and what difficulties he had to overcome related to involving the military specialists in the organizational development of the Red Army.

In carrying out practical leadership over the struggle against the superior forces of the interventionists and White Guards, V.I. Lenin organically linked together the political and military strategy and tactics of the party and through the representatives of the Central Committee, the VTsIK [All-Russian Central Executive Committee] and the SNK issued the appropriate directives and instructions to the high command. The party Central Committee never took over for the high command. The preparation and adoption of decisions by the Central Committee on military-strategic and operational questions were carried out in close contact with the high command.

V.I. Lenin was constantly up on events on the front and demanded precise information on the state of affairs on the crucial fighting sectors. He carefully studied the reports and summaries of the high command as well as the operational and military-political material received from the fronts. Under the direct leadership of V.I. Lenin, all strategic plans were worked out and constant supervision exercised over their fulfillment.

The historical documents show the complete falaciousness of the opinion prevalent during the time of the cult of personality that I.V. Stalin was the author of virtually all the strategic operations. Without any justification he was assigned the role of the inspirer and organizer of all our victories.

The difficulties in the area of military policy demanded the establishing of a firm course in the organizational development of the regular Soviet Armed Forces. This was done by the Eighth RKP(b) Congress.

Upon the instructions of the party Central Committee, on the eve of the Eighth RKP(b) Congress, provincial and army party conferences and meetings were held and a majority of these approved party policy on the military question. Decisions at them were taken confirming the need to further build up and strengthen in every possible way the Red Army as a class worker-peasant regular army. Attention was also paid to the benefit of putting military specialists from the old army into command positions.

In addition, the conference pointed out the increased role of the military commissars in the development and strengthening of the Red Army and particularly emphasized that in the organizational development of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Republic the main task was to train command personnel from workers and peasants, personnel deeply dedicated to the Communist Party and Soviet power.

The main provisions of the Communist Party's military policy were formulated at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress in the Accountability Report of the Party Central Committee, in the speeches of V.I. Lenin, in the Party Program and in the Theses of the RKP(b) Central Committee on the military question. For example, the Party Program adopted by the congress pointed out that in the age of the disintegration of imperialism and under the conditions of the growing Civil War it was impossible either to maintain the old army or build a new one on a so-called non-class or general-national basis. The Red Army as an implement of the proletarian dictatorship should be constituted exclusively from the proletariat and proletarian strata of the peasantry close to it. The Theses of the RKP(b) Central Committee established the necessity of creating a regular army with iron discipline and widely employing military specialists from the old army in command positions. At the same time, the congress documents emphasized the possibility and necessity of training capable and energetic command personnel from the workers and peasants and who were also dedicated to the cause of socialism. The theses pointed out also that the demand of a "police of all the people" was of important significance in the course of the struggle for a democratic republic but with the outbreak of the Civil War this had lost any purpose.

Coming out against the Central Committee theses was the "military opposition" which brought together the "leftist communists" (V. Smirnov, G. Safarov, G. Pyatakov and others) and party members who never before had been part of any opposition (F. Goloschekin, K. Voroshilov, N. Tomachev, Ye. Yaroslavskiy, R. Samoylova, A. Myasnikov and others). Upon the congress decision, a military section was established and this held three sessions: one on 20 March and two on 21 March.¹⁵

At the first meeting of the first section, of the 24 persons recorded, 23 spoke. A debate developed in the course of which the representatives of the "military opposition" put forward profoundly erroneous ideas on a number of questions of military organizational development. In particular, they accused the Central Committee that it was not providing the correct execution of military policy and had supposedly let the organizational development of the Red Army slip out of its hands. The opposition members (V. Smirnov and others), while not formally denying the need to use the military specialists, were against granting them command positions and proposed placing responsibility for solving operational questions on the RVS and this meant the establishing of collective troop command and control. Thus, the point of the "military opposition" was against the establishing of a regular, discipline Red Army with centralized command.

In the theses "On Military Policy" (of 15 points) proposed by V. Smirnov, it was pointed out that the proletariat's lack of technically trained command personnel made it completely inevitable to employ military specialists from the former officers. Then followed an erroneous conclusion: since supposedly the use of the military specialists contributes to the bureaucratization of the military personnel, the former officers cannot be an element of the Red Army. At the same time, individual representatives of the opposition (for example, A. Myasnikov) considered it possible to use the military specialists as consultants.

The opposition was against iron military discipline and certain prescribed ideas in the regulations. For example, G. Safarov endeavored to show that the regimentation of army life could have a negative effect on the mood of the middle peasantry inducted into the Red Army.

The theses of the "military opposition" were incompatible with the policy of the Communist Party aimed at the broad use of the old specialists in all areas of the national economy and the army as well as at the establishing of one-man command.

Usually our party history literature mentions the "military opposition" as a uniform group which did not have any internal differences. Even such a major publication as "Istoriya grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR" [The History of the Civil War in the USSR] did not say anything about the existence of the latter. This work

merely points out that "the opposition demanded broader functions for the military commissars and the granting them of a decisive voice on operational questions as well as broader rights for the army party organizations and this in essence led to collective troop command."¹⁶

At the same time, it is essential to point out that certain representatives of the "military opposition," in criticizing the theses proposed by V. Smirnov, on a number of major questions of party military policy, expressed the viewpoint of the Central Committee.

In the course of discussing the military question, many delegates sharply and correctly criticized the central military institutions and the activities of Trotsky as the chairman of the RVSR. They pointed out that he and other leaders of the military department did not know the state of affairs on the front, they did not call in the army communists and meet with them. The delegates protested the political line of Trotsky who endeavored to nullify the role of the party organizations and military commissars and who was against mobilizing for the army without class recruitment.

After the stormy debates which developed at the sessions of the military section, during the day of 21 March a majority of the participants (37 against 20) came out in favor of adopting the theses of the "military opposition." At that time, the congress delegates defending the viewpoint of the Central Committee and who were in a minority, convened a separate meeting and demanded that the discussion of the question of the organizational development of the Red Army be shifted to the congress plenum.

At a closed session of the congress on 21 March, V.I. Lenin, I.V. Stalin and A.I. Okulov spoke in defense of the Central Committee theses which established the need to move on to organizing a regular army. Thus, the delegate A.I. Okulov stated that our army could exist as a regular army only under the condition of the broadest, most complete and most reasonable employment of the military specialists. Okulov criticized the RVS of the 10th Army on the Southern Front which had ignored the instructions of the party Central Committee on using the military specialists and in a number of instances had not obeyed the instructions and decisions of the center.

I.V. Stalin who spoke at the congress, at the beginning of the speech voiced disagreement with the criticism of A.I. Okulov. In arguing against the "military opposition," he demanded the establishing of a regular army permeated with a spirit of discipline and with a well organized political section. Characteristically, at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress Stalin did not say a word about his attitude toward the party line of using military specialists. On this question, both before the congress and after it, he continued to hold his former erroneous position.

At the closed congress session V.I. Lenin gave a profound justification for the party line in the organizational development of a regular army. He pointed to the need to observe the principles of internal party democracy, to develop criticism and self-criticism and condemned the conduct of a minority of the military section which had refused to discuss the theses of the "military opposition." At the same time, V.I. Lenin rejected as unfounded the statement of the opposition on the unecessariness of creating a Defense Council and that the party Central Committee was not leading the military department. Vladimir Ilich emphasized that the Central Committee systematically led the military department and the questions of military organizational development were brought literally at each Central Committee session.

In noting the heroism of the soldiers, commanders and political workers of the Red Army on the fronts of the Civil War and in particular the defenders of Tsaritsyn in 1918, Vladimir Ilich criticized K.Ye. Voroshilov who had come out against the use of military specialists and against one-man command in the army and had defended partisan tactics.

The action of the representatives of the "military opposition" against the use of military specialists in the Red Army, even after this question had been affirmatively resolved not only by the Central Committee but by the Congress itself, was perceived by V.I. Lenin as a violation of the party line, general party tactics and the program of the RKP(b).

At the party congress great attention was given to establishing firm, conscious discipline in the Red Army. Vladimir Ilich considered the basis of this to be the unbreakable alliance between the working class and the peasantry. At the same time, certain representatives of the "military opposition" did not see a concrete linkage between the process of instituting firm military discipline and internal order in the army and the process of strengthening the alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

Among the most important questions settled at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress was the question of one-man command. The introduction of one-man command and its greatest possible strengthening in the army were viewed as the basis for the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces. Because of it there was a unified, flexible and centralized troop command and the commander was able to show initiative and independence in making decisions and in leading battle.

In working out the question of one-man command, V.I. Lenin considered that centralism did not contradict democracy but rather stemmed from the essence of the proletarian dictatorship and was determined by the very nature of the socialist system. He waged an implacable

struggle against those who insisted on hazy collectivism, endeavoring to introduce disorganization into the Red Army and undermine its discipline.

V.I. Lenin mercilessly criticized the actions of the "military opposition" at the congress in endeavoring to belittle centralized control of the Red Army. In pointing to the 10th point of the theses of the "military opposition" which emphasized the need to establish a collective command in the army, Vladimir Ilich particularly pointed out that this was a stunning, complete return to partisan methods and this could not be done in an army where centralization is essential.

At the same time, the congress considered all that was useful and found in the speeches of the individual representatives of the "military opposition" (better party political work in the army and the strengthening of the political bodies of the Armed Forces). The resolution pointed to the need of employing military specialists in the Red Army but under the condition of establishing constant party-political supervision over them through the commissars. The congress emphasized that the Red Army should be based on the principle of mobilizing only the labor elements and proposed strengthening the formation of command personnel from the workers and peasants.

The Eighth RKP(b) Congress particularly emphasized the role of the military commissars. "The commissars in the army," stated the resolution, "are not only the direct and immediate representatives of Soviet power but are primarily the carriers of the spirit of our party, its discipline, its firmness and courage in the struggle to realize the set goal."¹⁷ Having noted the heroic work of the commissars, the congress pointed out that this would provide complete results only in the instance that the commissars would rely on the direct support of the cells of communist soldiers. The congress approved the instructions worked out by the Central Committee on the rights and duties of the communist cells and the Regulation Governing Commissars and Political Sections, and proposed that these be constantly used as a guide in practical work.

In carrying out the congress decisions, the Communist Party headed by V.I. Lenin strengthened the Soviet Armed Forces. Under its leadership our Army and Navy during the years of the Civil War defeated the joint forces of international imperialism and won a victory in the Great Patriotic War.

At present, in considering the aggressiveness of the imperialist forces, the CPSU has pointed to the necessity of thoroughly raising the combat readiness of the Armed Forces. The main focus here is to deepen that restructuring of all the life and activities of the personnel, improve the quality of training for the troops and naval forces, establish prescribed order everywhere as well as strengthen organization and discipline.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 39, p 431.
2. See: "Vospominaniya o V.I. Lenine" [Recollections About V.I. Lenin], Gospolitizdat, Vol 2, 1957, pp 176-177.
3. Ibid., p 177.
4. M.D. Bonch-Bruyevich, "Vsya vlast Sovetam" [All Power to the Soviets], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1964, p 272.
5. TsPA IML [Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism], folio 17, inv. 2, stor. unit 5, sheet 1.
6. See: I. Kolesnichenko, "On the Question of Conflict in the Southern Front RVS (September-October 1918)," VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1962, pp 42-44.
7. TsPA IML, folio 558, inv. 1, stor. unit 441, sheet 4.
8. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1962, pp 43-44.
9. TsPA IML, folio 17, inv. 2, stor. unit 3, sheet 1.
10. "Dokumenty iz istorii grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR" [Documents From the History of the Civil War in the USSR], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, Vol 1, 1940, p 389.
11. Ibid., p 390.
12. TsPA IML, folio 558, inv. 1, stor. unit 432, sheet 1.
13. Ibid., stor. unit 443, sheets 2-3.
14. "Dokumenty iz istorii...," Vol 1, p 391.
15. The notes to the minutes of the Eighth Congress in the 1933 edition erroneously point out that the military section held two sessions: in the evening of 19 March and in the morning of 20 March (see: "Vosmoy syezd RKP(b), marta 1919 g. Protokoly" [The Eighth RKP(b) Congress, March 1919. Minutes], Moscow, 1933, p 497). This same error was also made in the articles of N. Kuzmin, "The Military Question at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress" (see: ISTORIYA KPSS, No 6, 1958, p 181) and P. Tsvetayev, "The Military Question at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress" (see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 3, 1960, p 11).
16. "Istoriya grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR" [History of the Civil War in the USSR], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, Vol 4, 1959, p 44.
17. "KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK" [The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 2, 1983, p 97.

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Sources of Defeat in Belorussia

00010010b VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
in Russian No 4, Apr 89 (signed to press 28 Mar 89)
pp 22- 31

[Article, published under the heading "Discussions and Debates," by Maj V.A. Semidetko, senior science associate at the Military History Institute of the USSR Ministry of Defense: "The Sources of Defeat in Belorussia (The Western Special Military District by 22 June 1941"]

[Text] In the course of the discussion which has been initiated on the pages of the journal concerning the initial period of the Great Patriotic War, many questions have arisen related to the dramatic events which occurred on one of the main strategic sectors and covered by the Western Special Military District (ZapOVO). In the initial period of the war, the district (from 22 June 1941, the Western Front) suffered heavy losses in men and equipment. Of the 44 divisions which existed at the start of the war, 24 were lost (10 rifle, 8 tank, 4 mechanized and 2 cavalry). The remaining 20 formations were deprived of an average of one-half of their forces while the air forces of the front lost 1,797 aircraft.¹

What had led to the disaster of the Soviet troops in Belorussia during the summer of 1941? What was the reason that one of our strongest groupings during the first days of the war lost a larger portion of its forces?

About 48 years have passed since those memorable and bitter days. Many times at different times historians have endeavored to explain the reasons for this tragedy. Various figures and data have been given on the ratio of forces, the number of weapons and military equipment. In taking the occasion to participate in the discussion, the author of the current article has taken up certain questions in the preparations of the troops of the ZapOVO, their condition as well as the state of the theater of military operations on the eve of the war, as this would largely determine the course and outcome of the defensive engagements in Belorussia and which ended so unsuccessfully for the Western Front.

The ZapOVO (commander, Army Gen D.G. Pavlov; chief of staff, Maj Gen V.Ye. Klimovskikh; military council member, Corps Commissar A.Ya. Fominykh) covered the sector from the area to the south of the frontier of Lithuania to the northern frontier of the Ukraine, having the task of preventing an enemy invasion into Soviet territory, and by a stubborn defense of the fortifications along the line of the state frontier to

cover the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the district troops. It was assumed that the nature of operations would be active. The enemy's attempts to breach the defenses were to be repelled by counterattacks and counterstrikes of the corps and army reserves using

the mechanized corps and aviation. It was planned that combat operations would be shifted to the aggressor's territory. Proceeding from this task, the grouping of forces had been established and prepared and the district's territory equipped.

Table 1. Effectives of ZapOVO by 22 June 1941

Armies	Formations Rifle, Airborne, Fortified Areas	Tank*
3d	IV rc (27, 56, 85 rd), 68 (Grodno) UR	XI mc (29, 33 td, 204 md)
10th	1 rc (2, 8 rd), 5 rc (13, 86, 113 rd), 6 cc (6, 36 cd), 155 rd** 66 (Osovets) UR	VI mc (4, 7 td, 29 md), XIII mc (25, 31 td, 208 md)
4th	XXVIII rc (6, 49, 42, 75 rd), 62d (Brest) UR	XIV mc (22, 30 td, 205 md)
Total in cover armies	rc-5, rd-13, UR-3, cc-1, cd-2 Just field headquarters	mc-4, md- 4, td-8
13th***	II rc (100, 161 rd), XXI rc (17, 24, 37 rd), XLIV rc (64, 108 rd), XLVII rc (55, 121, 143 rd), 50 rd, IV ac (7, 8 214 ab), 58 (Sebezh), 61 (Polotsk), 63 (Minsk), 64 (Zambrov), 65 (Mosyr), 67 (Slutsk) UR	XVII mc (27, 36 td, 209 md), XX mc (26, 38 td, 210 md)
Under district	rc-8, rd-24, cd-2, cc-1, ac-1, ab-3, UR-9	mc-6, td-12, md-6
Total in district, armies-4		

rc—rifle corps; rd—rifle division; cc—cavalry corps; cd—cavalry division; ac—airborne corps; ab—airborne brigade; UR—fortified area; mc—mechanized corps; td—tank division; md—mechanized division.

*All the tank and motorized formations, with the exception of the VI mc, were in the stage of organization.

**The divisions were in the reserve 170-280 km from the state frontier and actually were unable to operate as part of the cover armies.

***According to the General Staff Directive, organization was to start on 5 May 1941. By mid-June, the headquarters was only 40 percent manned.

The ZapOVO was one of the strongest military districts in the Soviet Armed Forces. In terms of its strength (see Table 1), it was inferior only to the Kiev Special Military District. It had around 672,000 men, 10,087 guns and mortars (not counting the 50-mm mortars), 2,201 tanks (including 383 KV and T-34) and 1,909 aircraft (including 424 new ones).² This was $\frac{1}{4}$ of the troops concentrated in the western districts. Based on the boundary between the Western and Kiev Special Military Districts, was the Pinsk Naval Flotilla (commander, Rear Adm D.D. Rogachev).

In addition, the border troops were also guarding the western frontiers. In Belorussia, they were organized in 11 border detachments and numbered 19,519 men.³ At the same time, the old frontier continued to be guarded and here there was a border and obstacle zone. Some 5 border detachments were serving in it. Such a measure was necessitated by the growing intelligence activities of the imperialist states and which were utilizing bourgeois-nationalistic bands and other anti-Soviet organizations left in the Western oblasts of Belorussia for their own purposes. The Nazis showed particular activity on the Belostok and Brest sectors. Thus, just in the area of the 17th Brest Border Detachment, the 12 line outposts of

which were located along a front of 180 km, in 1940 apprehended 1,242 spies and saboteurs, and in the first quarter of 1941, disarmed 114 Nazi scouts and thwarted scores of armed incursions.⁴

By the start of the war, a majority of the formations as well as the 13th Army (commander, Lt Gen P.M. Filatov) were in a stage of reorganization, rearming and manning-up. A significant portion of the formations was understrength in terms of personnel, weapons and military equipment and was inferior to the Nazi formations which had been completely mobilized, were up to wartime establishments, had combat experience and were trained for launching the attack.

The district had 24 rifle divisions. The manning level reached 37-71 percent of the wartime establishment. The combat training level was extremely low and the staffs had not been organized. A large personnel contingent called up from the reserves had not yet undergone a combat training course during the winter and spring of 1941. In many formations they were 6,000-7,000 men understrength in terms of the wartime establishments. One of the main reasons for the formation of a significant undermanning in them was the sending of the

rank-and-file and sergeant personnel to make up new units in the aviation and armored troops under the directive of the ZapOVO Staff.⁵ At the end of April 1941, they began constituting in the district the IV Airborne Corps (commander, Maj Gen A.S. Zhadov, appointed only at the outset of the war).

The supply of transport for the rear bodies was 40-45 percent, and this did not make it possible to meet the requirements of the troops during combat.

The situation was particularly bad with the manning of the armored troops. Of the 6 mechanized corps which were to be organized only the VI (commander, Maj Gen M.G. Khatskilevich) was almost complete in materiel. The remaining 5 had 5-50 percent of the BT and T-26 tanks and these were to be replaced by new design

vehicles. Half of the 8 tank divisions in the cover armies was understrength. Three out of 4 motorized divisions did not have tanks, motor transport and traction units for the artillery. The XVII and XX Mechanized Corps (commanders, Maj Gens M.P. Petrov and A.G. Nikitin) were virtually without tanks.

The tank fleet was based upon obsolete-make vehicles with around 83 percent. As of April 1941, they began to be replaced by the T-34 and KV, however this process was going on extremely slowly. By the start of the war, just the VI Mechanized Corps had 352 new tanks and this was 64.5 percent of the established number. In the remaining 5 corps there were virtually no modern-design vehicles (see Table 2). All of this had a negative effect upon the efficiency of mechanized corps operations in the initial period of the war.

Table 2. Ratio of Planned and Actual Number of Combat Vehicles, Artillery in Mechanized Corps on 13-19 June 1941*

Types of Combat Equipment and Weapons	By War-time TOE in Corps	Number of Mechanized Corps						Total in Mechanized Corps	
		VI	XI	XIII	XIV	XVII	XX	By War-time TOE	Actual
Armored Equipment									
KV-1	126	114	3	—	—	—	—	756	117
T-34	420	238	28	—	—	—	—	2520	266
BT-5, 7**	316	416	44	15	6	24	13	1896	518
T-26**	152	126	162	263	504	1	80	912	1136
G-27, 28, 37, 40	17	127	—	16	10	11	—	102	164
Total:	1031	1021	237	294	520	36	93	6188	2201
Armored Vehicles									
BA-20	116	102	45	5	23	4	5	696	184
BA-10	152	127	96	29	21	31	6	912	310
Total:	268	229	141	34	44	35	11	1608	494
Artillery:									
Mortars: 50- mm	138	114	124	121	127	138	109	828	733
—82- mm	48	49	38	27	38	37	49	288	238
Total Mortars:	186	163	162	148	165	175	158	1116	971
Cannons: 76- mm***	24	24	21	20	20	51	48	144	184
—45-mm AT	36	36	36	36	36	41	36	216	221
—37-mm AA	32	32	8	12	24	12	12	192	100
—76-mm AA	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	24	24
Total Cannons:	96	96	69	72	84	108	100	576	529
Howitzers: 122- mm	40	40	36	36	40	42	44	240	238
—152-mm	36	36	16	36	36	12	—	216	136
Total Howitzer:	76	76	52	72	76	54	44	456	374
Total Artillery:	358	335	283	292	325	337	302	2148	1874

*TsAMO [Central Archives of Ministry of Defense], folio 127, inv. 12915, file 89, sheets 39-102, 125, 219, 129-138, 160-166, 225-234, 252-263, 287, 330-335, 339-406, 447-451; file 85, sheets 1-22, 27-33, 75-85, 170-180, 415.

**All modifications.

***Regimental and divisional 76-mm cannons.

The artillery units of the mechanized corps had only 7-30 percent of the traction units (tractors). An exception was the VI Mechanized Corps which had 80 percent of the tractors.

Many mechanized corps were poorly supplied with motor transport. For example, the XI and XIII (commanders, respectively, Maj Gen Tank Trps D.K. Mostovenko and Maj Gen P.N. Akhlyustin) and the XVII and XX Corps had 8-26 percent of the established number of motor transport. Here 30 percent of the motor vehicles needed a major or medium overhaul. The situation was exacerbated by the poor repair capacity and by the absence of spare parts. There was an acute shortage of artillery and ammunition for the tank armament. Thus, there were basically fragmentation-high explosive rounds for the T-34 tank cannon.

The district also was experiencing a true personnel hunger. In line with the simultaneous deployment of a large number of tank and motorized formations, there were not enough middle-level and junior tank commanders and tank technicians. The manning level of the mechanized corps was 45-55 percent in terms of tank officers and just 19-36 percent in terms of NCOs. All of this naturally led to a lack of coordination in the corps and with the outbreak of the war they were unable to carry out the tasks assigned to them. According to the plan, they were to be ready by the end of 1942.⁶ During the last days of July 1941, they planned only individual training of the soldiers and combat training for the platoon and company. In tactical training the basic emphasis was in developing offensive actions.⁷

Commander training was carried out with major interruptions. The officer personnel was basically involved in directing the work of organizing the permanent positions and constituting the units and formations.⁸ According to the operational training plan, the working through of the questions for organizing an army offensive operation

was to be completed by 1 July and for a defensive operation by 1 November 1941. The commenced war impeded the realization of the planned.

On 14 May 1941, the Chief of the Main Motor Vehicle and Armored Directorate, Lt Gen Tank Trps Ye.N. Fedorenko, proposed arming the tank regiments of the mechanized corps before providing them with the anti-tank artillery combat vehicles and thereby make the mechanized corps battleworthy in the event of a war. The necessary number of these weapons was available at the dumps.¹⁰ The proposal to the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff was adopted and 2 days later the appropriate order was issued. Here the organizational principle of the tank regiment was not disrupted. However, it was not carried out as these proposals were to be implemented only by 1 July 1941.

The large amount of military equipment in the mechanized corps and its varying makes (in the VI Mechanized Corps there were 11 types of tanks) created difficulties in commanding such cumbersome formations, particularly under the conditions of highly fluid actions.

Regardless of the alarming situation, the district command did not cancel the artillery courses. Actually the formations of the 3d Army (commander, Lt Gen V.I. Kuznetsov) and the 10th Army (commander, Maj Gen K.D. Golubev) began the war without an antiaircraft cover since the artillery was at the district range. Only the artillery of the 4th Army (commander, Maj Gen A.A. Korobkov) which had a range to the south of Brest had completed the firing and was able to merge into its formations.

The Air Forces of the ZapOVO consisted of 8 air divisions (4 bad [bomber air division], 3 sad [composite air division] and 1 fad [fighter aid division]), 36 air regiments and 8 corps air squadrons. They were basically equipped with old types of aircraft. Thus, of the 855 fighters, only 253 were new (29.6 percent), and of the 466 front bombers, only 139 were new (29.8 percent).¹¹ There was a sharply felt lack of ground attack aviation which was the basic means for supporting the troops. There was a total of 85 aircraft, including 8 Il-2 (Table 3).

Table 3. Distribution of Aircraft by Aviation Arms*

Type	Total	Number of Aircraft		Percent of Total Number	Trained Crews	
		Percent of Total Number	Including New		Total	Percent of Total Number
Bombers	802	42	139	17.3	456	56.9
Including:						
Front	466	24.4	139	17.3		
Long-range	336	17.6	—	—		
Ground attack planes	85	4.5	8	9.4	70	32.4
Fighters	855	44.8	253	29.6	549	64.2
Reconnaissance planes	154	8.1	24	15.6	152	98.7
Artillery spotters	13	0.6	—	—		
Total	1909	100	424	22.2	1343	70.3
Including nonoperational	224					

*TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2589, file 94, sheets 4-7; folio 35, inv. 11285, file 70, sheet 6; file 268, sheets 20-24.

Also unsuccessful was the organizational structure of the district air forces. Army Group Center was supported by a large aviation formation, an air fleet, and this made it possible to have the massed employment of aviation on the axes of the main groupings. The ZapOVO did not have such formations. All the air formations were distributed between the district and the armies. There was no centralized command of aviation. Moreover, 37.5 percent of the air divisions was composite and they were armed with bombers, ground attack planes and fighters.

The equipment was slow in being mastered. There was an acute shortage of trained crews. The district air forces had only 224 nonoperating aircraft, and in fact in the event of a combat alert 342 combat aircraft could not scramble.¹² One-fifth of the crews could fly during daylight under instrument conditions. Sixty-four crews (15 percent) could make daylight sorties in bad weather on new aircraft and only 4 at night.¹³

Because of the shortage of airfields, the air forces were based in groups. A portion of the airfields did not have the necessary equipment, accessways, communications, capacity for storing fuel, and supplies of ammunition. Thus, of the 57 operational airfields located to the west of Minsk, there was fuel at only 22.¹⁴ Since a majority of the airfields could receive only old types of aircraft, accelerated construction was underway on 39 airfields with a surfaced landing strip.

The depth of basing for the air units and formations averaged 60-110 km for the fighter and ground attack aviation and 120-300 km for the bomber. A portion of the fighter airfields was located in direct proximity to the state frontier. Because of the shortage of airfields and reconstruction on the existing ones, a significant number of aircraft had accumulated at certain airfields. Here a large portion of the new types of aircraft was at the forward airfields located close to the frontier within the range of enemy artillery fire. For example, at the Dolubovo Airfield which was 10 km from the frontier, there were 73 aircraft based (including 50 new MiG-3) from the 126th Fighter Air Regiment of the 9th Composite Air Division (commander, Maj Gen Avn A.S. Chernykh).¹⁵

The district command devoted a great deal of attention to the engineer organization of Belorussian territory and particularly the Belostok salient. However, there was not enough time to complete this as well as other measures. After the annexation of Western Belorussia to the USSR in 1940, a line of fortified areas (UR) began to be established along the new state frontier. There were plans to build four UR: Grodno, Osovets, Zambrav and Brest, each some 80-180 km long and 3-8 km deep. The forward edge was to run 2-8 km from the frontier.¹⁶ The general plan for defensive construction envisaged the completion of construction and equipping of the first zone of defensive centers and strongpoints of the fortified areas in 1940-1941. In subsequent years (up to 1945) there were plans to build the second lines and completely

equip the mothballed fortified areas of the second line (on the old frontier) which were 200-320 km from the first: Polotsk, Sebezh, Minsk, Slutsk and Mozyr.

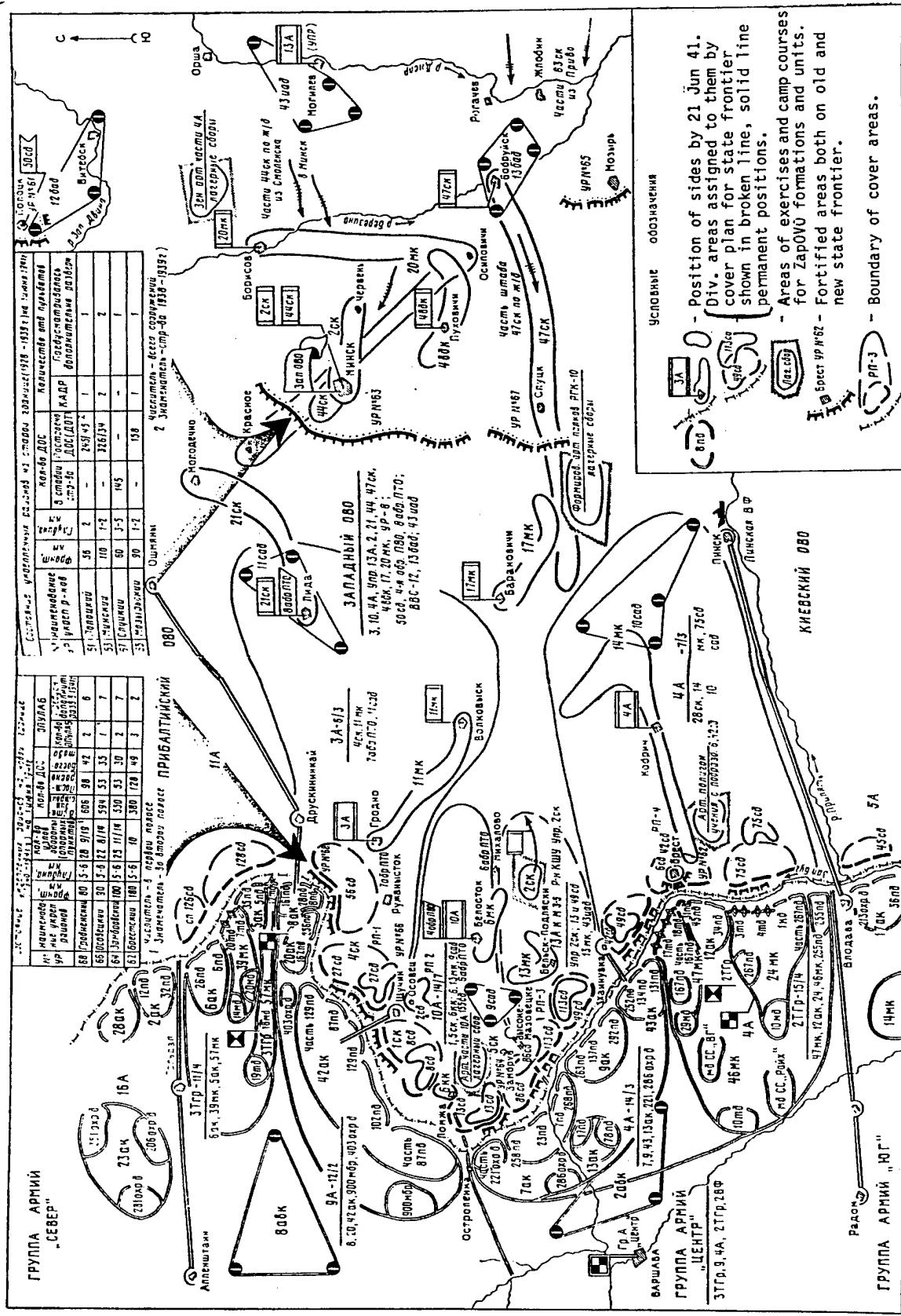
Defensive centers and strongpoints comprised the basis of each fortified area. By June 1941, of the planned 1,174 permanent gun emplacements, 505 had been built and 193 had been equipped and armed (38.4 percent).¹⁷ Such a number of defensive centers and strongpoints did not make it possible to establish a strong defensive system of fortified areas. The manning level of their garrisons was low.

Little attention was paid to working out the questions of cooperation between the UR garrisons and the field troops. Joint exercises were conducted extremely rarely. Thus, for 1941 the district planned only one such exercise for the units of the 27th Rifle Division (commander, Maj Gen A.M. Stepanov) of the 3d Army and the Grodno UR.¹⁸

For communications in the troops (in spite of the increased importance of radio), the ZapOVO before the start of the war basically employed the telegraph and telephone lines of the People's Commissariat of Communications. The supplies of building materials available to the district for building and repairing the permanent communications lines in the event of a war could satisfy only 10-20 percent of the requirements of a front-level operation in the initial period of the war. The regulation signals equipment of the district troops was available in the following amounts: radios (army and airfield for 26-27 percent, corps and divisional with 7 percent, regimental with 41 percent, battalion with 58 and company with 70 percent); equipment sets (telegraph with 56 percent and telephone with 50 percent); cable (telegraph with 20 percent and telephone with 42 percent).¹⁹ This was clearly insufficient. By the start of the war, the district staff did not have mobile communications equipment.

The operational deployment of the ZapOVO troops (see Diagram 1) was to be carried out according to the plan for covering the state frontier and which on 11 June 1941 was submitted to the People's Commissariat of Defense. Regardless of the fact that the plan had not been approved, according to it four armies were to be deployed on a sector of 470 km. In operational terms the Pinsk Naval Flotilla was subordinate to the commander of the 4th Army. The defensive zone of the 3d Army reached 120 km, that of the 10th Army (until the arrival of the headquarters of the 13th Army) was 200 km and for the 4th Army, 150 km. The 13th Army which had been constituted in the interior was to take up the defenses between the 10th and 4th Armies. The 113th and 86th Rifle Divisions (commanders, respectively, Maj Gen Kh.N. Alaverdov and Col M.A. Zashivalob) and the XIII Mechanized Corps (commander, Maj Gen P.N. Akhlyutsin) were to be transferred to the 13th Army from the 10th Army. In working out the plan significant mistakes were made. Not enough forces were assigned to

Diagram 1. Operational Deployment of ZapOVO Troops According to Plan for Covering State Frontier



cover the state frontier. A total of 13 divisions was assigned to the first echelon of the cover armies and as a result of this each of them received a rather broad defensive zone. As an average, there were 40 km per division in the 3d Army, around 33 km in the 10th and 37.5 km in the 4th Army.

The second echelons of the cover armies positioned 10-90 km from the frontier included 12 tank and motorized divisions and 1 cavalry division. Some 18 divisions (including 6 tank and motorized) made up the reserve of the district commander.

An analysis of the plan for defending the state frontier shows that the basic mass of the district formations was concentrated on the Belostok salient. Of the 26 first-echelon divisions, 19 were deployed here, including all the tank and mechanized. The strongest 10th Army was at the center of the operational configuration. It was moved forward in comparison with the 3d and 4th Armies. As a result, the flanks of the created grouping were weak and this was used by the enemy at the start of the war. In launching powerful flanking strikes, it surrounded a large portion of the troops in the Belostok salient.

As a whole, the troop grouping in the ZapOVO was more suitable for an offensive than for the defensive.

A comparison of the forces of the ZapOVO and Army Group Center (commander, Gen Field Mar von Bock) concentrated in the zone of the district indicates that their ratio was approximately equal. An exception was tanks (see Table 4).

Table 4. Ratio of Forces in Zone of ZapOVO on 22 June 1941

Forces	Enemy	ZapOVO	Ratio
Divisions	40	44	1:1.1
Personnel (thousand men)	820	671.9	1.2:1
Guns and mortars (without 50-mm mortars)	10,763	10,087	1.06:1
Tanks	810	2,201	1:2.7
Aircraft (operational)	1,677	1,685	1:1

However, a quantitative analysis does not provide a complete and accurate notion of the balance of forces. One must also consider the state and training of the units and formations, the quality of weapons and combat equipment. The Nazi troops, in having approximately a quantitative equality, for many indicators surpassed the ZapOVO troops for quality. The operational configuration of Army Group Center was also better. Particularly weak was the left wing of the district, where the 4th Army was on the defensive. Here the enemy reached a 3-4-fold superiority.

The grouping of Soviet mechanized corps was also unsuccessful. The weakest of them (XI and XIV) were on the flanks and were unable to repel the powerful initial enemy tank strikes. The district troops had also not completed their operational deployment. They had not been brought to combat readiness. The formations of the cover armies were in their permanent positions or in camps and were unprepared to repel aggression. The district command did not show initiative, it did not alert the troops and bring them up to the defensive lines. In truth, the early bringing up of the troops to the prepared positions along the frontier had been prohibited by I.V. Stalin in order not to provoke a war.

A correct but isolated decision was taken on 15 June 1941. According to it the II (100 and 161 rd), XLVII (55, 121, 143 rd), XLIV (64 and 108 rd) and XXI (17, 37 and 50 rd) Rifle Corps which were 150-400 km from the state frontier began to move up toward it. But unfortunately this was late. The district plan was not designed for an enemy surprise attack. The only variation of troop operations was to repel the first strikes and then go over to the offensive.

Thus, the war caught the field forces and formations of the ZapOVO unmobilized. The grouping defined by the cover plan had not been deployed and the troops went into battle in the condition which they were at the start of the war. This did not ensure a strong defense of the state frontier or a covering of the mobilization and deployment of the main district forces. Moreover, such a grouping of forces predetermined the enemy's launching of enveloping flanking strikes and isolated actions by the district troops.

Not everything was done to ensure firm command of the armies and support continuous contact with them. Reliance on wire facilities, the permanent communications lines and centers of the People's Commissariat of Communications was wrong. Enemy sabotage groups disrupted wire communications during the first hours of combat operations and on many sectors even long before this.

This was the general state of the ZapOVO troops and the theater of operations by the start of the Great Patriotic War. It had a decisive impact on the unsuccessful outcome of the first defensive operations by the troops of the Western Front and led to the defeat in Belorussia.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 108, inv. 2579, file 16, sheets 1-3; file 23, sheet 97; folio 38, inv. 30802, file 19, sheets 70-76.

2. Ibid., folio 208, inv. 2589, file 93, sheet 5; folio 38, inv. 11353, file 5, sheet 138.

3. "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva: Kurs lektsiy" [History of Military Art: Lecture Course], Moscow, Izd. Voyennoy Akademii imeni M.V. Frunze, Vol 5, 1958, p 24.
4. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1988, pp 50-51.
5. In the first half of 1941, the following were constituted: the headquarters of a rifle corps and 5 mechanized corps, 10 tank and 5 motorized divisions (TsAMO, folio 15, inv. 725588, file 36, sheet 276).
6. TsAMO, folio 131, inv. 12980, file 1, sheets 113-316.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., file 6, sheet 60.
9. Ibid., inv. 12508, file 4, sheets 16-23.
10. Ibid., folio 38, inv. 11353, file 881, sheets 4-5.
11. Ibid., folio 35, inv. 11321, file 93, sheets 5-6.
12. Ibid., folio 208, inv. 2589, file 94, sheets 5-7.
13. Ibid., folio 35, inv. 11285, file 70, sheet 6; file 268, sheets 20- 24.
14. Ibid., file 14, sheet 136.
15. Ibid., folio 208, inv. 2589, file 93, sheet 6; file 94, sheet 5; file 42, sheet 20.
16. Ibid., folio 69, inv. 812008, file 3, sheet 99.
17. Ibid., sheets 101-103; folio UR, inv. 279381, file 136, sheet 38.
18. Ibid., folio 68 UR, inv. 8277, file 9, sheet 179.
19. Ibid., folio 15, inv. 725588, file 36, sheets 25, 54.

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Pre-WWII Efforts to Strengthen Military Discipline Discussed

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[Text] The junior command personnel is the most numerous detachment of commanders and are closest in service status to the rank- and-file. The junior commander was precisely responsible for the individual

training of the soldier and was directly responsible for the state of military discipline in the squad, platoon and even the company. But for a number of years, the great capabilities of the junior commanders in strengthening military discipline were far from best utilized. One of the reasons for such a situation, as was pointed out in the Directive of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Political Directorate of 11 July 1940 and approved by the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee was the fact that the junior commanders were not the "central figure in the work of the party and Komsomol organizations," little was done to bolster their authority and at times they were unjustly criticized at assemblies, "forgetting that the Red Army command personnel is not elected but rather appointed and for this reason its service activities should not be criticized at assemblies."¹ This, in the opinion of the RKKA Political Directorate, led to a situation where many junior commanders felt uncertain and were afraid to deal strictly with subordinates for laxness and lack of discipline.

In considering that the Komsomol organization was always to provide complete help to the Komsomol commanders in strengthening discipline and in unmercifully eradicating laxness and disorder in the subunits, the RKKA Political Directorate proposed:

"1. To prohibit the discussion and criticism at meetings of the Komsomol organizations, including at the Komsomol presidiums and accompany Komsomol meetings, as well as the official activities and misdeeds of Komsomol commanders."² In the future, questions of Komsomol misdeeds by Komsomol commanders were to be examined at the unit Komsomol Bureau.

In evaluating these measures, we cannot help but admit that they to a certain degree limited the rights, initiative and independence of the Komsomol organizations in the Army and Navy. But it is essential to remember that during those distant July 1940 days, World War II was in full swing and the French Army had collapsed within 40 days. In the existing situation, it was essential to take measures which would help to strengthen military discipline. The Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of 2 November 1940 on instituting new military ranks in the Red Army was aimed precisely at this. It defined in detail the conditions for awarding the newly established military ranks (for the rank-and-file Red Army men and private 1st class, for the junior command personnel, junior sergeant, sergeant, senior sergeant and master sergeant) as well as the procedure for awarding them. From 1 January 1941, the wearing of shoulder loops and insignias was established for the privates 1st class, senior Red Navymen and junior command personnel.

The new military ranks and insignias raised the importance of the junior commander.

The rank-and-file was the most massive object of all work being done to strengthen military discipline. Additional difficulties in this area arose in the mid-1930s in line with its ever-progressing younger composition. While in the 1930s, 22-year-olds were inducted for compulsory service in the RKKA and they were largely already developed individuals, from 1936, they began converting to an induction age of 19 years. This transition was carried out over a period of 4 years, through 1939 inclusively.

The USSR Law "Governing Universal Military Service" adopted on 1 September 1939 confirmed the procedure for inducting 19-year-olds and established that persons having a complete secondary education could be inducted at the age of 18. Thus, in 1940-1941, the ranks of the Red Army and Navy were receiving many young persons born in 1921-1922 and the work of establishing discipline among them had a number of specific features.

The new tasks of strengthening military discipline among the rank-and-file were determined by the fact that the Law of 1 September 1939 cancelled the class restrictions on military service and also increased the period of active service for certain serviceman categories.

It must also be pointed out that as a result of the major advances made in conducting the cultural revolution, there was a significant rise in the general education level of the inductees and the party-Komsomol stratum of the rank-and-file had grown.

The entire Red Army community had to be enlisted in the fight to strengthen discipline. At the beginning of 1939, Red Army comrades' courts were organized in all companies, squadrons, batteries and teams of the RKKA units. They were to review various misdeeds, particularly those involved with a violating of military discipline, with the exception of crimes which were to be investigated by the court bodies as well as cases which the commander and political instructor felt it necessary to resolve on a disciplinary basis. The newly created courts were to provide the greatest possible aid to the command on the matter of observing military discipline and revolutionary order by the Red Armymen in the RKKA.

The greatest possible activization of the Red Army community and its mobilization to strengthen military discipline conformed completely to the socialist nature of the Red Army and had a beneficial effect on a significant portion of the personnel. However, even in the course of local combat in certain troop units there still were instances of a flagrant violation of military discipline. Thus, during the Soviet-Finnish War, instances of desertion and wounding oneself were recorded. All of this reduced the discipline of the RKKA personnel in the prewar period. Absences without leave of the rank-and-file and NCO personnel and other violations assumed a mass nature.

In the aims of strengthening military discipline, a policy was set of the greatest possible rise in the demands on its observance and this was officially set out in the new Red Army Disciplinary Regulations put into effect on 12 October 1940. The Section "General Provisions" directly stated that "Soviet discipline in the Red Army should be higher, stronger and be marked by harder and severer demands than the discipline based on class subordination in the other armies.... The interests of defending the socialist state demand the application of the harshest measures of compulsion to the violators of discipline."³

As for the punishments for such military crimes as the theft of socialist property, desertion and so forth, in accord with the general course of the party and state leadership of those years of intensifying repressions against servicemen who violated discipline, even from the beginning of the 1930s, they acted mercilessly, making mass use of the harshest punishments, right up to execution.

Now it was a question of a sharp hardening of the punishments for the rank-and-file and NCO personnel for absences without leave. On 8 June 1940, that is, just 1 month after his appointment to the post of USSR People's Commissar of Defense, Mar S.K. Timoshenko sent a note to the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo which asserted that the punishments provided in the RSFSR Criminal Code for military crimes did not help strengthen discipline in the Red Army. For example, Article 193-7 (Point "a") stated that the rank-and-file and junior command personnel after absence from the unit without leave was to be held criminally liable only in the instance that this absence without leave lasted over 6 days. In proposing the greatest possible hardening of punishments for absences without leave and other military crimes, Mar Timoshenko wrote: "It is essential to revise the RSFSR Criminal Code, particularly Chapter 9 "Military Crimes" and issue an Ukase of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet...on military crimes which would be a national law." On 30 July 1940, a draft was published of the new USSR Law "On Responsibility for Military Crimes."

At the same time, new specific measures were taken to instill order in the Army. On 11 June, an order of the people's commissar of defense "On Eliminating Disorder and Establishing a Strict Regime at the Guard-houses" was put into effect and soon thereafter the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 6 July 1940 "On Criminal Liability for Absences Without Leave and Desertion" was published. According to the latter document, the Red Armymen, Red Navymen, sergeants and petty officers in regular service for absence without leave were subject to a military tribunal and were to be sent to the just organized disciplinary battalions for a period from 3 months to 2 years.

However, an inspection made in September 1940 by the co-workers of the General Staff and RKKA Political Directorate of the disciplinary battalions disclosed a number of essential shortcomings in their work as well as their overcrowding. As a result of the inspection, on 22 October the people's commissar of defense issued Order No. 214 which demanded strict observance of the procedures where by all servicemen being punished in the disciplinary battalions be dressed in the Red Army uniform (condemned junior commanders were stripped of their military ranks) and each one of them was called a Red Armyman. "New battalions and companies were organized in a number of the military districts for relieving the disciplinary battalions.

Due to the inspections conducted by the political bodies, it was ascertained that at times soldiers and junior commanders who had committed minor crimes were condemned and sent to the disciplinary battalions. The leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense decisively demanded the "complete eradication" of such cases.

During the period of the growing military danger, there was a constant policy of hardening the punishments for the violating of military discipline. This can be seen from the sharp rise in the number of servicemen condemned by military tribunals.

A majority of the personnel understood the policy of hardening the punishments for violating discipline, although there were many Red Armymen and junior commanders who took a negative view of the Ukase of 6 July 1940.

In the aims of improving the authority of the commander who was the immediate superior, at the end of July 1940 the people's commissar of defense issued an order on the procedure for handling official questions and submitting complaints by servicemen. At that time, the Provisional Disciplinary Regulations of 1925 were in effect and these permitted the servicemen to submit a complaint about an immediate superior to the higher level (Article 59). In 1940, the cases of the submitting of such complaints by the servicemen grew more frequent and this, in the opinion of the People's Commissar of Defense, Mar Timoshenko, did not help but rather obstructed a further strengthening of military discipline. The people's commissar cancelled Article 22 of the Internal Service Regulations of 1937 and the entire 7th Chapter of the 1925 Provisional Disciplinary Regulations ("On Complaints"), having approved a new wording for them: "It is categorically prohibited to turn to superior chiefs on service questions and complaints without the permission of immediate superiors for this. Any appeal by a serviceman not up the line of command in any form whatsoever is to be viewed as an infraction of Soviet military discipline." Soon thereafter, this provision was reinforced in the new 1940 Disciplinary Regulations (Article 76).

Of important significance in strengthening discipline on the part of junior command personnel in the Red Army and Navy was the order issued in August 1940 of the people's commissar of defense on the observance of uniform rules by the servicemen and the maintaining of uniforms in a clean and proper state. Proceeding from the view that external appearance is the prime indicator for the state of discipline of a serviceman and that subunit in which he serves, the people's commissar ordered: "Each day at morning inspections the squad commanders and master sergeants are to carefully inspect the condition of the uniform and footwear of each soldier. The eliminating of the slightest flaws and defects in their external appearance is not to be overlooked and demanded from the men...."⁴

All Red Armymen and junior commanders in regular service were obliged to personally wash their uniforms during a camp period. Measures were taken to supply each soldier with an individual shaver. Shaving and haircuts for the men were provided by the men themselves.

In placing increased demands on the discipline of the entire personnel of the RKKA and RKKF [Worker-Peasant Red Navy], the Communist Party and the Soviet state endeavored to improve their material situation as much as possible. Even in April 1930, the USSR TsIK [Central Executive Committee] and SNK [Council of People's Commissars] approved the Code of Benefits for RKKA Servicemen, Reservists and Their Families. This provided definite benefits in the area of agriculture, employment and social security, public health and education, for taxes and fees, for state insurance as well as housing, postal services and in traveling by rail and waterway. Moreover, monetary aid and benefits were introduced for serving in remote localities of the USSR.⁵

An important area of all activities for the Communist Party and the Soviet government to strengthen military discipline was the struggle of the political bodies, party organizations and the finest representatives of the command personnel against various distortions in disciplinary practices and for instilling the socialist dignity of each man. This was carried out under the difficult conditions of the ever-deepening ideology and practice of the cult of personality and the ongoing introduction of administrative-order, command-punitive methods of directing the country.

Each person realizes that the life of the army personnel is based upon the unswerving observance of the requirements of the military regulations and the orders of the commanders, on strict military discipline. At the same time, in recalling the instructions of Lenin, the advanced military-political workers emphasized that in our army military discipline must also have a comradely nature.

On 26 November 1935, in a speech at a conference of the chiefs of the political bodies of the Belorussian Military District, the Chief of the RKKA PU [Political Directorate], Ya.B. Gamarnik, stated that the introduction of

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personal military ranks should force all the political workers to work even harder on strengthening comradeley ties between all categories of Red Army personnel. We should instill in ourselves and in all persons around us, in all persons subordinate to us, a feeling of greatest respect for the rank of the commander, the rank of the political worker or superior, and should instill in each person a feeling of the dignity of a Red Army soldier.

Of particular concern was the circumstance that many commanders abused the rights granted to them, seeing in punishments almost the only means of strengthening discipline.

Unconditionally among the negative factors one cannot help but also put the mass repressions of the command personnel in 1937-1938 and these undermined discipline in the Red Army. On the one hand, they gave rise to excessive timidity among the remaining commanders and, on the other, an excessive and at times inadmissible zeal (again out of the fear of being repressed for the poor discipline of subordinates and endeavoring to ensure a certain level by any means including those unacceptable for a socialist army). Even a supporter of the most extreme means, the chief of the RKKA PU L.Z. Mekhlis was forced to admit at an all-Army conference of political workers in April 1938 that there were "many disorders and absurdities" in disciplinary practices.

One of the most harmful distortions of the Leninist principles of struggling for Soviet military discipline was the illegal, unconstitutional and antisocialist elevation of the role of the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] co-workers in the life and fate of any Soviet soldier, from Red Armyman to marshal of the Soviet Union. Being completely independent of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense], the NKVD workers, according to the then current instructions and often exceeding their demands, began to take over for the commanders and political bodies, assuming the rights of omnipotent controllers and dispensers of the fate of any Red Armyman, political worker and commander. In certain areas even the civilian NKVD bodies began to be involved in "eradicating enemies of the people from the RKKA." Only on 13 January 1939 was a joint order of the USSR NKO and NKVD issued which stipulated that in the future the arrests of the rank- and file and junior command personnel of the RKKA would be made by the NKVD with the approval of the district military councils, while arrests of the middle, senior and higher command and supervisory personnel of the RKKA would require approval from the USSR people's commissar of defense.

However, regardless of the issuing of this order, on the spot as before there were frequent instances of the flagrant, criminal violation of socialist legality. At that time, there were not many bold persons who resolved to come out against the illegality encouraged from above. But they still existed. Among such persons was I.V. Rogov. In being a member of the military council of the

Belorussian Military District in 1939, he officially reported to the People's Commissar Voroshilov and to the Chief of the RKKA PU Mekhlis on the disorders created by many NKVD workers and urgently requested that they take the appropriate measures. A start was made. A special commission from the USSR NKVD was sent to the district and some time later the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Beriya, in informing the RKKA PU on the results of this inspection, was forced to admit that in the Belorussian Military District a "competition" had been organized between individual workers of the special sections for the largest number of arrests and the rapid obtaining of confessions from the arrested. Instances of employing provocative methods for conducting the investigation were affirmed.

The archival documents show that the RKKA PU repeatedly raised the question of the inadmissibility of removing the NKVD from under party control and on the need to carry out definite practical measures to increase the role of the Army and Navy political bodies and party organizations in ensuring the constitutional rights of the Soviet military and their social protection. But Stalin, in reply to direct appeals to him, preferred to remain silent.

The history of the Order to the Troops of the Kiev Special Military District of 9 February 1940 is convincing proof of the bold struggle of commanders and political workers indoctrinated by the Communist Party to observe socialist legality. This document states that there were instances when the servicemen were arrested by the NKVD bodies and by the procurator's office without the agreement of the district military council. "In the future," the order stated, "it is categorically prohibited for the NKVD and procurator's bodies to arrest servicemen without the approval of the military council and I order that on this question they strictly follow the NKO-NKVD Order of 13 January 1939." This order was signed by the deputy district commander, Corps Cmdr V.F. Gerasimenko, the military council member, Div Commissar S.N. Kozhevnikov and the district chief of staff, Corps Cmdr (in the future Army Gen) N.F. Vatutin.

Subsequently, events developed as follows. The military procurator of the KOVO [Kiev Special Military District] who more than anyone else was to guard socialist legality protested this order. But the district military council, having reviewed the procurator's protest, did not cancel its order. Then on 22 March 1940, the acting chief military procurator, Div Judge Advocate Gavrilov, turned to the chief of the RKKA PU and requested that this order be cancelled as supposedly contradicting Article 127 of the USSR Constitution and infringing on the rights of the procurator's office. After a careful study of the arising problem, the RKKA PU abided by its principled position and adopted the decision: "We will not cancel the order."

In strengthening military discipline, the commanders, political bodies and party organizations fought against all sorts and at times discredited distortions of disciplinary practices. On the one hand, in the troops there was a fear of applying decisive measures against disciplinary violators and there was an unique sort of tolerance. On the other hand, they had to wage a daily struggle against an even more dangerous distortion of assault and battery against subordinates.

Individual instances of assault and battery had been encountered previously. A decisive rebuff had been dealt to any such attempts. But from October 1940, there was a sharp revival of "assault and battery" attitudes. This was caused primarily by the fact that the new Disciplinary Regulations were full of insufficiently clear provisions. Points 6 and 7 stated: "In the event of disobedience, outright resistance or an intentional violation of discipline and order, a commander has the right to take every measure of compulsion, even up to the point of employing force and weapons.... The commander is not responsible for the consequences if he was forced to employ force or weapons to compel a person who does not obey orders and for restoring discipline and order."⁶

In a number of instances, these provisions were understood not completely correctly and were interpreted as official permission for assault and battery against undisciplined Red Army men.

Many commanders and political workers openly stated that the time had come when it was possible to employ force against negligent subordinates.

For the servicemen who showed a conscientious and zealous attitude for service duties, who were concerned for protecting weapons and property and who excelled in military and political training, commendations and decorations were employed. The 1940 Red Army Disciplinary Regulations set the following commendations and decorations: personal statement of gratitude; commendation before the formation; commendation in an order; permission for leave from troop positions during time free from exercises for 1 day (for rank-and-file and junior command personnel on active service); awarding of valuable gift; issuing of monetary remuneration; lifting of disciplinary infraction; awarding of chest insignias set by government and by orders of people's commissar of defense; awarding of ranks of junior command personnel.

In 1938, by the order of the NKO, chest insignias were established "RKKA Sniper" and "For Outstanding Marksmanship." In 1940, servicemen began to receive the chest insignia "RKKA Outstanding Man" for outstanding indicators in combat and political training and for excellent service.

The Decree of the USSR TsIK and SNK of 7 May 1936 confirmed the general regulation on USSR orders and this established that the highest decoration for particular

accomplishments in the area of socialist construction and the defense of the USSR was the Order of the USSR. By this time, the USSR TsIK had established five orders: Order of Lenin, Red Banner, Red Star, Labor Red Banner and "Honor Badge." The USSR TsIK presented the orders. Those decorated were paid at state expense each month as follows: 25 rubles for the Order of Lenin, 20 rubles for the Red Banner, 15 rubles for the Orders of the Labor Red Banner and Red Star and 10 rubles for the "Honor Badge." The order holders had the right to travel free on the streetcar in all cities of the Soviet Union. By the Ukases of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 17 October 1938, the medals "For Valor" and "For Combat Achievement" were struck. In addition, in April 1934, the highest distinction—the title of Hero of the Soviet Union—was established.

In those prewar years, the awarding of an order or even a medal was perceived by each Soviet soldier and his combat comrades as a major event. The decrees of the USSR TsIK and later the Ukases of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on the decorating of soldiers and commanders were published in the press.

Honorific revolutionary Red Banners were awarded to troop units, ships as well as formations which had "proven their exceptional loyalty to the proletarian dictatorship." At the end of December 1940, the USSR people's commissar of defense approved the Regulation on the "Challenge Red Banners of the Red Army for Combat Training." These banners were to be presented at the end of each training year after review exercises and inspections.

High military discipline was an indispensable condition for both an individual and collective decoration. The evermore improved system of decoration became one of the elements in the general range of measures to strengthen discipline in the RKKA and undoubtedly had a beneficial effect on this process.

* * *

[Editorial Comment] In summing up the brief results of the activities of the Communist Party and Soviet government in strengthening Soviet military discipline in the prewar years, it must be admitted that steadfast, systematic, diverse and decisive work was carried out in this area.

Particularly noteworthy in the given terms was 1940 which both in terms of the decisiveness and diversity of the measures as well as the results achieved, without any doubt, can be termed the turning point in maintaining and strengthening discipline in all elements of the Soviet military organism. Discipline was strengthened among the command personnel, disciplinary practices were improved, the authority of the commander's order rose

and efficiency improved. It can be said with full certainty that if this work had not been carried out at that time, the troops at the outset of the enemy aggression would have been in a much more difficult situation.

Nevertheless, the nature and results of all this work cannot be judged uniformly. Along with the undoubtedly positive measures helping to raise conscious socialist military discipline, there were also certain problems. A certain portion of the command personnel underestimated the importance of persuasion in strengthening Soviet military discipline and made a fetish out of coercion.

This policy of predominant reliance on coercion in the work of strengthening discipline was reinforced in the 1940 Disciplinary Regulations and in certain subsequent orders of the people's commissar of defense. The number of disciplinary infractions rose sharply. Under the conditions of the predominance of the cult of personality, the flagrant mass violations of socialist legality against the military personnel and the prevalence of administrative-bureaucratic leadership methods, the creation of socialist iron but at the same time comradely military discipline was extremely difficult. Distortion and the warping of the fundamental principles of socialism had a paralyzing influence on the work of the political bodies and party organizations and did not make it possible to fully utilize the advantages of the socialist system in creating a new type of military discipline.

At present, almost a half-century later, something else is also clear. A great deal of time was spent on taking proper decisions and the decisive measures carried out to strengthen military discipline were somewhat delayed. The level of Soviet military discipline, although it had risen somewhat in comparison with 1937-1938, by the summer of 1941 still did not fully meet those demands which armed combat would require against such a giant of world capitalism as Nazi Germany was at that time.

A true scourge was also the fact that as before the personnel committed an enormous number of disciplinary infractions. With good reason the act transferring the affairs of the USSR People's Commissariat of Defense by Mar Voroshilov to Mar Timoshenko officially stated: "Military discipline is not at proper height and does not ensure the precise execution of the battle tasks set for the troops."⁷ None of the members of this commission at that time could guess precisely what tasks history would pose for the Red Army.

A little more than 6 months remained until the moment of the invasion by the German Wehrmacht. And although during this time certain additional organizational and indoctrinal measures were taken, they did not bring about a decisive improvement. The "Great War" irrefutably showed that the state of military discipline determines not only the fate of the Soviet Armed Forces but also the fate of socialism as a whole both in our nation and on a world scale.

Footnotes

1. "Partiyino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoy Armii. Dokumenty. Iyul 1929-may 1941" [Party-Political Work in the Red Army. Documents. July 1929-May 1941], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, p 425.

2. Ibid.

3. "Distsiplinarnyy ustav Krasnoy Armii" [Red Army Disciplinary Regulations], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1940, pp 5-6.

4. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 21 August 1940.

5. SOBRANIYE ZAKONOV SSSR, No 23, 1930, Article 253.

6. "Distsiplinarnyy ustav Krasnoy Armii," pp 6-7.

7. TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 11309, file 15, sheet 8.

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[Article, published under the heading "In the Search for Truth," by Col V.P. Krikunov, editor for the problems of the history of strategy and operational art: "The 'Simple Arithmetic' of V.V. Shlykov"]

[Text] [Editorial Introduction] At present, numerous materials of various sorts are being published concerning historical truth and this can only be welcomed. However, here history must not be distorted even in minor details. Issue No. 9 of the journal MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN in 1988 published an article by Candidate of Economic Sciences V.V. Shlykov entitled "And Our Tanks Were Fast." The editors of VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL have received numerous letters from the readers on this material. Let us give excerpts from them.

O.S. Orelovskiy (Minsk) writes: "The article is interesting if only for the fact that for the first time it provides us with general information on the state of the Soviet tank troops before the war." He is seconded by Comrade V.I. Poddennyy (Vinnitsa): "In the reading room I saw people copying...facts which had been concealed from the masses for more than 40 years," and adds: "that an article about the tanks did not appear in your magazine is a major mistake for the journal."

Even earlier V.V. Kaminskiy (the town of Borisov in Minsk Oblast) on the questions of historical truth in publications wrote: "How is it possible to keep a secret of what can be calculated without any particular problem?

I have in mind data on the state of our army in the west on the eve of the war.... If a historian has access to the archives, then he should provide not only accurate figures but also information on the documents and analyze their reliability.... For example, the data given for the Kiev Special District in the various sources differ by 1,000 tanks."

In meeting the requests of the readers as well as in the aim of restoring the truth, we have endeavored to review certain questions raised by V.V. Shlykov. [End of Editorial Introduction]

Vitaliy Vasilyevich [Shlykov] in the article states that "we have not published official data on the number of tanks existing in the USSR by the start of the war. According to Western estimates, they numbered over 20,000, that is, approximately 5-6-fold more than in the Nazi invasion army."¹ "If, however, one shows even a minimal curiosity, one can establish without any particular difficulty...."² But why does Shlykov not show this curiosity, why does he not read the Soviet historiographic literature and why does he use only Western in his articles? Certainly these data have been repeatedly given in our press.³ Even if it is assumed that they were concealed by the Soviet press or were not completely accurate, then "the author of a number of publications on military and military-economic subjects" who claimed the role of a "serious historian" would obviously, under the conditions of glasnost, make up for this gap on the basis of analyzing archival documents and not by simple arithmetic calculations or references to foreign sources, then using the four mathematical functions known to all, the article at present could have been written not only by a candidate of economic sciences but also by any school child. Are historical truth, facts and documents needed? No, it is simpler to have addition and multiplication than the fabrications and references to certain other data, as Vitaliy Vasilyevich does. In his article he writes: "It is also known that by the moment of the German invasion, the Soviet Union had 61 tank divisions (58 in mechanized corps and 3 separate divisions) and each of these according to the wartime establishment was to have 375 tanks. Having multiplied 375 by 61, we obtain 22,875 tanks. Of course, in a number of divisions tanks might not be at full strength and a certain portion of them could be in the process of reorganization....

"Moreover, in addition to the tank divisions the Soviet troops had a large number of separate tank brigades, regiments and battalions."⁴ Why should we not continue these mathematical calculations? Let us multiply 31 (the number of motorized divisions in the Soviet Army by the start of the war) by 275 and add the large number of tanks in the separate units. What happens? For some reason, V.V. Shlykov was afraid of carrying out this mathematical function. The end result would have been generally astronomical. But, in our view, Vitaliy Vasilyevich did not find such confirmation. In the foreign sources there is not even an approximate figure and it is not given by V.I. Dashichev whose book "The Bankruptcy of the Strategy of German Nazism" is referred to by the scientist.

Number of Tanks in Mechanized Corps by Start of War*

Military Districts	Corps Number	Number of Tanks	
		Total	Including KV & T-34
Leningrad MD**	I, X mc	1,506	15
Baltic Spec. MD	XII, III mc	1,393	109
Western Spec. MD	XI mc	237	31
	VI mc	1,021	352
	XIII mc	294	—
	XIV mc	520	—
	XVII mc	36	—
	XX mc	93	—
Kiev Spec. MD	IV mc	892	414
	VIII mc	858	171
	IX mc	285	—
	XV mc	733	131
	XIX mc	280	11
	XXII mc	647	31
	XVI mc	608	—
	XXIV mc	222	—
Odessa MD	II mc	489	60
	XVIII mc	280	—
Moscow MD**	VII, XXI mc; 51 sep. btln.	1,134	9
Kharkov MD**	XXV mc	300	20
Orel MD	XXIII mc	413	21
N. Caucasus MD	XXVI mc	184	—
Transcaucasus MD	XXVIII mc	869	—
Central Asian MD	XXVII mc	356	—
Transbaykal MD**	V mc; 57, 61 td; 82 md	2,602	—

Far Eastern Front** XXX mc***,
59 td, 69 md 2,969 —

*TsAMO [Central Archives of Ministry of Defense], folio 10, inv. 373, file 12, sheets 59-81; folio 14, inv. 112, file 174, sheets 140, 142; folio 15, inv. 1845, file 41, sheets 77-79, 84, 89, 95-98; folio 113, inv. 3275, file 9, sheet 81.

**The number of tanks in the districts and on the Far Eastern Front is given considering those available in the combat formations, military schools, courses, training centers as well as in civilian higher institutions of learning.

***By the start of the war there was no XXIX Mechanized Corps.

Is it possible to count in this manner? According to Shlykov's arithmetic, yes! However, an analysis of the archival documents shows a somewhat different picture. In the first place, in the Soviet armored troops by the beginning of the war there were not separate tank brigades, regiments and battalions. While existing previously, they had been employed to organize the mechanized corps. On the first day of the war, just two separate tank battalions existed: one each in the Moscow and Volga Military Districts.⁵ Secondly, in actuality, in the Soviet Armed Forces by 22 June 1941, there were 29 mechanized corps (the reader should remember this figure), a majority of which was in the stage of organization. Each of them consisted of two tank divisions and one motorized division. According to the TOE, a tank division should have 375 different type combat vehicles and a motorized division should have 275. As a total, a corps would have 1,031 tanks. By the start of the war, the number of tanks in the mechanized corps is shown in the table from which it can be seen that only two mechanized corps (I, VI) possessed tanks for supplying the tank divisions according to the "simple arithmetic" of Shlykov. The data of the table provide also a notion of whether or not we had a tank superiority of "approximately 5-6-fold" over the "Nazi invasion army."⁶ The readers themselves can see that we did not have such an advantage. It is impossible to consider the tanks which were part of the interior districts as well as the districts defending the southern and Far Eastern frontiers of our motherland as being among the combat vehicles participating in repelling the first enemy strikes. The German invasion army had over 4,000 tanks and assault guns.

Also requiring clarification is Shlykov's assertion that "the ratio of German and Soviet tank troops can be also seen from the fact that Germany assigned 19 tank divisions for attacking the USSR (at that time it had a total of 21 tank divisions). Here one German tank division had according to the TOE from 147 to 209 tanks, that is, $\frac{1}{2}$ the figure of a Soviet division."⁷ Why, when it was a question of the Soviet tanks, was Vitaliy Vasilyevich very fond of "simple arithmetic," but when it was the Nazi tanks, he did not use it. Let us turn to the work by the former Wehrmacht major general B. Muller-Hillebrand. He writes: "...In each tank division in 1941 as an average...there were up to 196 (tanks.—V.K.) (the divisions differed sharply in terms of the number of tanks, varying from 147 to 299 vehicles)." Then in a table he shows that just $\frac{1}{3}$ of the divisions concentrated against the USSR was those with the smallest number.⁸

V.V. Shlykov does not turn to Soviet sources to clarify the given question. Certainly it is easiest to state that "the Soviet press has been silent about this." That is not the case. In the same year that the book by the Nazi general was published, our source published that a Wehrmacht tank division from 10 February 1941 through 24 September 1943 had 209 tanks.⁹

Such a statement by Comrade Shlykov refutes the Wehrmacht general: "Of the 3,582 tanks assigned by the Nazi Command for the first strike against the Soviet Union,

about 1,700 were light T-I and T-II tanks."¹⁰ B. Muller-Hillebrand writes: "By the start of the war against the Soviet Union...removed from the troops as obsolete were virtually all the T-I and T-II tanks as well as all 35 T (Czechoslovak.—V.K.) tanks. On the T-III tanks a cannon with a 50-mm caliber was mounted in the place of the 37-mm cannon." All the same, by this time around 180 T-I combat vehicles and 746 T-II remained.¹¹

Shlykov has also distorted the statements of G.K. Zhukov about our tanks: "Tank production was rapidly rising. Over the first five-year plan, 5,000 were produced and by the end of the second, the army already had 15,000 tanks and small tanks. All these vehicles were marked by high fire power (in G.K. Zhukov, power.—V.K.) and high speed. At the same time, our possible enemies did not have their equal in terms of these qualities."¹² But after this G.K. Zhukov stated: "In truth, they were little maneuverable and easily vulnerable for artillery fire. Their technical and combat quality was still on a low level and they very frequently broke down. The tanks operated on gasoline and, consequently, were highly inflammable and did not have sufficiently strong armor."¹³

Everyone knows that the Germans were able to count. It is no accident that F. Halder in his diary wrote: "The number of tanks as a whole (infantry divisions + mobile formations) (in the western border military districts of the USSR.—V.K.) is very high (up to 10,000 tanks against the 3,500 German tanks). However, considering their quality, this superiority is insignificant."¹⁴

Vitaliy Vasilyevich has not shed "additional light on certain 'blank spots' in our historiography relating to the period preceding the Great Patriotic War."¹⁵ He writes: "No direct estimates were published on Germany's capability to produce tanks and which the Soviet General Staff was guided by on the eve of the war in planning its own tank requirements. However, there are very expressive indirect data: in February 1941, the General Staff turned to Stalin with a study on the urgent need to organize an additional 20 mechanized corps with 32,000 tanks, including 16,600 KV and T-34. Thus, the General Staff clearly assumed that for a war against Germany, considering the 'obsolete' tanks, it would need at least 50,000 tanks."¹⁶

Thus, as a result of simple addition (V.V. Shlykov has added another 20 to the 29 mechanized corps), a new figure appeared designating the number of tanks planned by the General Staff for a war against Germany. Let us turn not to the "indirect data" but rather to the statement of G.K. Zhukov on this question: "In 1940, they began forming new mechanized corps, tank and motorized divisions. Some 9 mechanized corps were established. In February 1941, the General Staff worked out an even broader plan for creating armored and motorized troops and this had been envisaged by the government's decisions in 1940.

"In considering the number of armored troops in the German Army, the people's commissar and we requested in organizing the mechanized corps that we employ the existing tank brigades and even the cavalry formations as the closest to the tank troops in their 'maneuvering spirit.'

"I.V. Stalin obviously did not have a definite opinion on this question and vacillated. Time passed and only in March 1941 was a decision taken to constitute the 20 mechanized corps requested by us.

"However, we did not consider the objective capabilities of our tank industry. For the complete equipping of the mechanized corps some 16,600 tanks of just the new types would be required for a total of around 32,000 tanks. Under no conditions was there time to produce such a number of vehicles in a single year and both technical and command personnel were lacking.

"Thus, by the start of the war, we had been able to equip less than 1/2 of the corps being constituted. It was precisely they, these corps, which played a major role in repelling the first enemy strikes."¹⁷ That is, it is a question of the above-listed 29 mechanized corps. So, V.V. Shlykov has made a "dark spot" out of a "blank one."

Footnotes

1. MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN, No 9, 1988, p 119.

2. Ibid.

3. See: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 8, 1968, p 110; No 5, 1988, p 48; No 11, 1988, pp 28-39.

4. MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN, No 9, 1988, pp 119-120.

5. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 14, inv. 112, file 174, sheets 140, 142.

6. MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN, No 9, 1988, p 119.

7. Ibid., p 120.

8. B. Muller-Hillebrand, "Sukhoputnaya armiya Germanii 1933-1945" [The German Land Army of 1933-1945], Moscow, Izd-vo Inostr. Lit-ry, Vol II, 1958, pp 146, 250.

9. "Voyevyye deystviya Sovetskoy Armii v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voynы 1941-1945" [Combat Operations of the Soviet Army in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, Vol 1, 1958, pp 360, 361.

10. MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN, No 9, 1988, p 121.

11. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., Vol 2, pp 141-142, 144.

12. MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN, No 9, 1988, p 122.

13. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Recollections and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1971, p 137.

14. F. Halder, "Voyennyy dnevnik" [Military Diary], Moscow, Voyenizdat, Vol 2, 1969, p 347.

15. MEZHDUNARODNAYA ZHIZN, No 9, 1988, p 118.

16. Ibid., p 127.

17. G.K. Zhukov, op. cit., p 197.

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Fate of Jurists in Tukhachevskiy Case Examined 00010010e VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 89 (signed to press 28 Mar 89) pp 45- 51

[Article, published under the heading "In the Search for Truth," by Lt Gen Just B.A. Viktorov: "And He Put His Signature...(From the Notes of a Judge Advocate)"]

[Text] In being involved in a review of the court verdict on the case of the leaders of the so-called "military-fascist conspiracy" (this was described in detail in my article "Conspiracy in the Red Army" published in PRAVDA on 29 April 1988), we, the judge advocates in a group specially set up under the Chief Procurator's Office, in the course of our work became interested in the fate of those who handed down the unjust sentence....

One of the members of the Special Court Presence of the USSR Supreme Soviet was the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Defense for Aviation, Army Cmdr 2d Rank Ya.I. Alksnis. His signature is also on the sentence of M.N. Tukhachevskiy, I.E. Yakir, I.P. Uborevich, A.I. Kork, N.P. Eydeman, B.M. Feldman, V.M. Primakov and V.K. Putna to execution.

Five months after the participation of Alksnis in this court trial, the following events occurred.

At dawn of 23 November 1937, two black motor vehicles known popularly as "black crows" pulled up to the drive of the house where the family of Army Cmdr Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis lived. Emerging from them was a group of individuals who were also baptized as "birds of prey." They had come for their next "prey."

On the desk of the awakened army commander they put a quarter of a sheet of paper, his order for arrest. It stated: "The right of arrest and search given to the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] agent." Seemingly, this official paper should also have a line "grounds of arrest." However, usually it was not the case to write about the reason of the latter as this would be explained later on, at Lubyanka.

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More important for the executors was who had signed the order. In the given instance it had been signed by Yezhov. Vyshinskiy had sanctioned the arrest.

Many knew at whose will the signatures had appeared. Such persons as Alksnis would not have been thrown into prison without the approval of Stalin and Voroshilov.

It was no surprise that they unceremoniously ripped the Order of Lenin and the two Orders of the Red Banner from the tunic of Alksnis and with unconcealed disdain threw away the submitted identifications of the member of the USSR RVS [Revolutionary Military Council] and deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Now a "nobody" stood before these "birds of prey."

And literally it was several months before that nightmarish dawn when Ya.I. Alksnis had been appointed to the post of the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Defense for Aviation (he had become one of the closest assistants of K.Ye. Voroshilov), he had been elected a deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet 1st Sitting and had been made a member of the Special Court Presence of the USSR Supreme Soviet for judging the traitors of the motherland. The history of the Red Army had not known a more stellar career.

"For what reason?!" Alksnis could not help asking the question. "For what reason?" was also the question we confronted as soon as we saw the case of Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis which we had taken from the archives. "For what reason?" we were asked by Alksnis' wife Kristina Karlovna Lidnis who twice underwent the hardships of exile and their son I.Ya. Alksnis who had been taken away at the age of 10 from his parents and for a long time knew nothing about them....

In order to find the official explanation for the reason of an arrest, lawyers are fond of looking at the case starting from the end. It is precisely here that one finds the final conclusions and the decisions following them are set out.

Initially, we "retrieved" the protocol of the court session of the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court of 28 July 1938. In studying the document, one was immediately struck by the fact that the court session was held 9 months after the arrest. Alksnis had waited almost 300 days for the decision on his fate. And under what conditions? We, of course, were interested in this.

On a single sheet of paper there was the entire "court investigation" of a person supposedly guilty of such major crimes as betraying the motherland, belonging to one of the counterrevolutionary organizations and sabotage.

Later we ceased being amazed at the brief records of the "court investigations" which lasted, as the secretaries wrote at that time without hurrying, some 15-20 minutes proceeding the handing down of the sentence. And still

we had to read the original documents with the entries made in them. For example, it was recorded that the presiding officer explained the essence of the accusation made against Alksnis and to the question of whether he considered himself guilty, the defendant replied as follows: "I recognize completely, I confirm my testimony at the investigation. I have nothing to add."

And that was the entire "investigation." There was no evidence by witnesses. No documents were made public. In truth, one formality was observed and that is that the condemned was given his "last words." Alksnis said: "If possible, spare my life. I am ready by any labor to expiate my guilt."

From the record of the court session of the Military Collegium, it was impossible to learn what Alksnis had confessed to the court and what guilt he was ready to expiate. Nevertheless, the sentence read: "The Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Soviet considers it established that Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis committed the crimes stipulated under Articles 58-1 "b", Points 8 and 11 of the RSFSR Criminal Code and has sentenced him to the severest punishment of execution. The sentence is final and cannot be appealed." This was announced on 28 July 1938. The case ends with the words: "The sentence was carried out on 28 July 1938." Hence immediately! On the very same day, as if under the Law Governing Terrorists of 1 December 1934, although Alksnis was not accused of terror. He was not the only one to suffer this fate (one wonders if there were any legal fine points). The persons sentenced to execution were annihilated without delay.

What specifically incriminated Alksnis? To what did he admit being guilty? Let us continue to study his case.

Several days passed after the arrest of Ya.I. Alksnis, but there was not a single transcript of his interrogation in the file. We were already familiar with this. Evidently, the arrested did not give the required evidence and had not signed what had been prepared in his name.

In 1956, one of the investigators who had conducted the so-called investigation "of the Alksnis case," was still alive and healthy. The director of the restaurant car had come back from a long trip, and he was one of the former investigators E.A. Ivker. Still working in other departments were the former investigators A.O. Postel and M.Z. Edlin. We invited them to the Main Judge Advocate Offices and demanded explanations.

Here is a portion from the evidence of the former NKVD investigator M.Z. Edlin: "I went to Lefortovo Prison to interrogate my arrested persons. I was summoned by the division chief Rogachev, handed the transcript of the interrogation of Alksnis and told: 'Get him to sign.' I of course carried out the orders of my superior, I took the transcript and gave it to Alksnis to read. Having read it through, Alksnis replied literally the following to me: 'Let the person who drew it up sign it.' I reported this to

Rogachev. I knew that now Alksnis would be beaten as any person who did not sign was cruelly beaten by Rogachev. Several days later, I listened and watched while Alksnis was cruelly beaten by several persons who were specially hired for this at the prison."

The fact of cruel and repeated beatings of Alksnis was confirmed by two other former NKVD investigators, A.O. Postel and E.A. Ivker.

After this evidence, it was clear how Alksnis had signed such a "confession": "I was involved in espionage activities against the USSR by the former chief of staff of the Latvian Army, Hartmanis. I was recruited into the counterrevolutionary Latvian Nationalist Organization by Yan Berzin and upon its assignment was involved in sabotage in the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army]." This was enough for the investigation to confirm: "Alksnis is a spy. An agent of Latvian bourgeois intelligence, Alksnis was engaged in sabotage in the RKKA."

Was it possible at that time to believe the evidence? From all probability, this question must be answered affirmatively. Certainly we already knew that the members of the Special Court Presence of the USSR Supreme Court, including Alksnis, believed that Tukhachevskiy and his "co-conspirators" turned over to the court were agents of German intelligence. It was stated that Stalin had authentic documents received from abroad accusing Tukhachevskiy of treason, the organizing of a military conspiracy by him and promising to make territorial concessions at the expense of the Ukraine and so forth.

Who in 1937 knew the truth about the fabricating of these "documents" by Nazi myrmidons? Undoubtedly, Stalin did. And he employed these "materials" to settle with Tukhachevskiy and other prominent military leaders using the hands of their very associates. In a report at the Main Military Council, K.Ye. Voroshilov stated to all of them: "They...were caught with the goods." What more proof was necessary!

The member of the court and Army Cmdr 2d Rank Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis joined Budenny and Ulrikh in interrogating the condemned. Here is what is stated in the verbatim transcript of the court session of the Special Court Presence of the USSR Supreme Court:

"You," said Alksnis, turning to Kork, "said that you repeatedly met Kostring at diplomatic receptions and provided him with certain information. Here you said 'we.' Who was this 'we'?"

Kork: "The we was Tukhachevskiy, Yakir and Eydeman. I also participated in conversations with the Germans."

Alksnis: "Hence you, Kork, informed verbally the German military attache Kostring of the state of the troops in the Moscow Military District."

Kork: "Yes. But at the same time I should add that I have the right to give this information to Kostring as Tukhachevskiy had given permission to provide it."

There is no information as to what was said. But clearly there was no need for this. During those years, the German military attache Kostring and a number of other Reichswehr representatives were repeatedly present at district exercises, including in the Moscow Military District, and had a rather complete notion about the Red Army.

Moreover, large groups of German officers were studying in our military schools. For this reason it was scarcely secret information which was handed on during conversations at diplomatic receptions. Nevertheless, Alksnis remained dissatisfied with Kork's reply. He said:

"At present, we are not interested whether or not Tukhachevskiy gave you permission to hand on the information. We are interested in whether or not you did?"

Kork: "Yes."

Alksnis: "Hence you were personally involved in espionage?"

The court recorder in the transcript noted: "Kork did not reply anything to this question."

Only after being arrested, after Alksnis had met with the investigator Rogachev and his associates did he realize why his meetings at diplomatic receptions with the military attache of bourgeois Latvia, Hartmanis, were constantly interpreted as "espionage encounters," for no other replies except the admission of espionage would satisfy the investigators.

And they got from Alksnis what they wanted. We already know by what methods. The false confession was signed.

The NKVD employed the "materials" from the investigation of the Alksnis case 3 years later in arresting Hartmanis. At that time, in 1940, Latvia became Soviet and the NKVD arrested the former chief of staff of the Latvian Army, Gen Hartmanis.

At an interrogation on 7 June 1941, he was questioned about his espionage links with Alksnis. Having confirmed the fact of acquaintanceship and meetings at diplomatic receptions while the military attache in Moscow, Hartmanis stated that he had not espionage link with Alksnis. This was confirmed by documents. In the "Reference List on the USSR" published by the Chief of the German Security Police and the SD prior to Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, there are, for example, the following lines: "Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis (alias Astrov) is among the category of persons dangerous for the Nazi regime and who should be arrested in the event of the capture of Soviet territory by the Nazi troops." Of course, you did not shoot your own spies.

Equally falacious was the accusation against Alksnis of belonging to a counterrevolutionary Latvian nationalistic organization. The falsifiers themselves created this in their imagination and here they endeavored to blacken the names of many completely honest communists, for example, Yan Karlovich Berzin.

In becoming acquainted with materials on the history of the VChK [All-Russian Extraordinary Commission], we repeatedly encountered the name of this man who had carried out numerous responsible assignments to thwart and prevent activities by the enemies of the revolution.

In 1936, Yan Karlovich Berzin became the chief Soviet military advisor in republic Spain. Many enthusiastic responses survived concerning his work in this post from our officers who participated in carrying out their international duty and frequently met with him under a very difficult combat situation. In them one frequently encounters the words: "Completely dedicated to the ideals of communism, an implacable fighter against fascism, a firm, strong-willed man."

Nevertheless, false evidence was the basis of the accusatory sentences for Berzin and Alksnis.

Our work continued. We had to answer just the last question: What was seen as sabotage in the RKKA by Alksnis who prior to his arrest for several years had held the posts of chief of the Air Forces and USSR deputy people's commissar of defense for aviation. In studying the archival materials, we concluded that this accusation was in a flagrant contradiction of reality. Linked with the name of Alksnis were the birth of the Air Fleet, its development and modernization. He was responsible for the initiative of involving the Lenin Komsomol in sponsoring the Air Forces. At the Ninth Komsomol Congress, upon the proposal of the General Secretary of the Komsomol Central Committee, A. Kosarev, he proposed the slogan "Komsomol member, to the aircraft!"

In line with this, the USSR RVS [Revolutionary Military Council] adopted the following decree: "To consider from 25 January 1931, the Red Banner All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League as the sponsor of the Air Forces of the RKKA."

The active and fruitful collaboration of the Komsomol, Osoaviakhim [Society for Assisting Defense and Aviation-Chemical Construction] and the Air Forces brought numerous successes in the training of pilots who, for example, in 1935 were trained at 5-fold more air clubs than in 1932. In the summer of 1935, a great holiday, an air parade, was held at Tushino Airfield. The young master pilots demonstrated their accomplishments in flying gliders and aircraft. They were rightly awarded high praise from the party and state as well as from I.V. Stalin who was present at the parade.

Alksnis selected the best pilots for carrying out the high international duty of aiding republic Spain. Some of them perished there. Others returned to the motherland as heroes. But the training of these "aces" by Alksnis was not considered favorably. On the contrary, soon thereafter many of these heroes were declared to be "enemies of the people" remembering that they had been linked to the "enemy of the people" Alksnis."

It is curious, but before receiving approval for the arrest of Alksnis, Yezhov placed a new sensational announcement on Stalin's desk: "The USSR NKVD has discovered yet another carefully concealed counterrevolutionary organization named the 'Russian Fascist Party' consisting of air specialists and headed by the aviation designer A.N. Tupolev."

Certainly Tupolev in 1937 already had to his count the aircraft on which the famous long-distance flights had been made and the bomber designed by him had been commissioned in the Red Army Air Forces and at that time was considered one of the best in the world.

However, on 21 October 1937, Andrey Nikolayevich Tupolev was thrown into prison as a counterrevolutionary and wrecker and accused of undermining the combat might of military aviation; he spent 1,367 days in prison.

The accusation against Alksnis, Tupolev and other condemned aviation specialists of sabotage in the Air Forces was considered unsubstantiated by the USSR Supreme Court in 1956. The same conclusion was reached by the Air Forces High Staff after a thorough investigation of the reasons for various flight accidents in those years as well as the conclusions which were confirmed by the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Air Forces, Lt Gen Avn F.A. Agoltsov. Ya.I. Alksnis, A.N. Tupolev and the other aviation designers condemned with Tupolev were completely rehabilitated.

Our work on the case of Ya.I. Alksnis was not completely over. In my opinion, we must describe what should be the concern for the workers of the Main Judge Advocate's Office.

In June 1987, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev received a letter from the 95-year-old Col Avn (Ret) Anatoliy Grigoryevich Avstafyev. He wrote: "I saw the film 'Repentance.' For several years, I served with the Army Cmdr Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis. He was unjustly accused of being an enemy of the people. I request that orders be given to lift from me the political unreliability which I suffered under for many years." An official letter was sent to Anatoliy Grigoryevich from the Main Judge Advocate's Office with the following content: "Your former superior Ya.I. Alksnis in 1956 was completely rehabilitated. As is seen from your letter, you were never held under criminal or court proceedings and for this

reason there can be no question of any suspicion toward you, including in line with your joint military service with the rehabilitated Alksnis."

In my opinion, one need not be surprised over the request from a person who served with an army commander accused of being an "enemy of the people." For some, joint service with the "enemy of the people" Alksnis became "grounds" for continuing the repressions....

We were convinced of this in continuing our work of reviewing the cases. The "accusatory materials" fabricated in the NKVD during the times of Yezhov served as the basis for the condemnation and execution of completely innocent persons. Subsequently, they were circulated and securely stored. A personal dossier was kept for each person mentioned in the evidence of the arrested.

Beriya was convinced that "all of this will be useful." And he was not wrong. A war against the Nazis was approaching. The blame for mistakes in the preparations to repel aggression had to be placed on someone.

In 1936, not long before his arrest, the Commander of the Belorussian Military District, Army Cmdr 1st Rank I.P. Uborevich, warned: "Aviation in a future war represents such a mighty force that in military terms Smolensk and Minsk cannot be seriously defended." And certainly not only these cities!

And there he was, L.P. Beriya, the former leader of the NKVD and during the war years one of the deputy heads of the Soviet government, together with the then new leader of the state security bodies, V.S. Abakumov, discussing the situation which had arisen and they concluded that they knew the persons to blame for the first military setbacks. It was merely a question of correctly answering the questions they asked themselves, namely:

"Who heads the Air Forces?"

"Lt Gen Avn P.V. Rychagov."

"Who heads national air defense?"

"Col Gen G.M. Shtern."

"Who coordinates their activities on the General Staff?"

"The Chief of the General Staff, Army Gen K.A. Meretskov and the Assistant Chief of the General Staff, Lt Gen Avn Ya.V. Smushkevich."

Just imagine all the persons named had been sent to Spain in 1936-1938, they had contacts with Germans and other foreigners there and not only with the antifascists. Hence, this could be used as a supposition of treason and most importantly, in the NKVD archives there was evidence from the executed "enemies of the people" Alksnis and Berzin in which the names of all the

listed persons figure as co-participants in the military conspiracy. In the past the military correspondent in Spain who had been unmasked as the "resident of Nazi intelligence" and by that time already executed Mikhail Koltsov had also mentioned them as like thinkers. Enough "material" had been gathered to start an investigation. "It is now a question," concluded Beriya, "for all these materials to fall into the hands of experienced investigators and under your leadership, Comrade Abakumov, a new conspiracy in the RKKA would be discovered. Stalin would be pleased. He would undoubtedly have the proper praise!"

There was certainly no shortage of such "experienced" investigators. After the arrest and condemnation of N.I. Yezhov and the punishing of a small group of inveterate sadist investigators, Beriya had wisely protected against punishment and kept in his personnel a number of careerists and falsifiers who promised to serve him loyally.

The choice fell on L.Ye. Vlodzimirskiy, L.L. Shwartsman, B.V. Rodos, A.A. Avseyevich and certain others. Leadership over them was entrusted to Abakumov's deputies V.N. Merkulov and B.Z. Kobulov who were "famous" for their ability to "direct the investigation in the proper direction."

Of all the "conspirators" set for arrest, the role of the "leader" in this new "military-fascist conspiracy" was given to Army Gen Kirill Afanasyevich Meretskov. He had been closely linked in service in Spain with the military leaders who were to be arrested. He was declared to be a participant in the conspiracy with Tukhachevskiy, Uborevich and Kork in the aim of "giving battle to Stalin."

At the same time, the activities of K.A. Meretskov had been highly regarded by the Soviet government. In his service record were: for the defense of Madrid in the autumn of 1936 and for the Haram fighting, Meretskov had been awarded a second Order of the Red Banner (he had received his first in 1918 in fighting at Kazan), and the Order of Lenin for participating in the defeat of the Italian Expeditionary Corps at Guadalajara.

The commander abilities of K.A. Meretskov after the stay in Spain moved him up among the prominent military leaders. He received an appointment to the post initially of commander of the Volga Military District and then the Leningrad.

The elaboration and successful implementation of the plan to eliminate the military bridgehead on the Karelian Isthmus were linked with the name of K.A. Meretskov. At the end of the war with Finland in 1940, there was a change in the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense. MSU S.K. Timoshenko

became the USSR People's Commissar of Defense and K.A. Meretskov was appointed the chief of the General Staff and from January 1941, the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Defense.

The commenced war caught Meretskov in the troops in the Baltic. On the second day of the war, he received orders to report immediately to Moscow. He was informed of his appointment as the permanent advisor on the Headquarters of the High Command (that is, in essence under I.V. Stalin). In the capitol, Meretskov was escorted to Lubyanka. There he fell into the "clutches" of investigator Shvartsman. Shvartsman himself has described what these days in the life of the military leader were like.

In 1955, after the arrest of Beriya and Abakumov, Shvartsman was also arrested. In admitting his guilt, the latter in court stated: "Physical methods were employed against Meretskov initially by high officials including the Deputy People's Commissar for State Security Merkulov and the Chief of the Investigative Section Vlodzimirskiy and later by investigators Zimenkov and Sorokin and myself. He was beaten with rubber rods."

To a question from the member of the Military Collegium, Col Just P.A. Likachev whether the defendant was aware that they were beating a prominent military leader and an honored person, defendant Shvartsman replied: "I had such high instructions that they could not be discussed." Beriya also admitted the facts of the mocking of Meretskov, having said that "it was a meat grinder."

All of a sudden, the order arrived: "Meretskov is to be immediately released from prison." Only Stalin could explain who had issued such an order and why. All of this was much in his style....

(To be continued)

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**Previously Unpublished Excerpts From
Rokossovskiy Memoirs**
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in Russian No 4, Apr 89 (signed to press 28 Mar 89)
pp 52- 57*

[Article, published under the heading "Cuts, Omissions and Withdrawals," by MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy: "A Soldier's Duty"]

[Text] [Editorial Introduction] Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovskiy...a man of a glorious and difficult fate who lived a fine, heroic and difficult life. Articles and books have been written about many stages in this life. The marshal also left us his book of memoirs in which he shared his thoughts, observations of life and

combat experience. In attracting the attention of readers in their boldness of views, sincerity and newness of facts, the memoirs have been repeatedly reissued.

Considering the demands of the readers, last year Voyenizdat published their 5th edition. However, there are few who know that the book delivered to the stores included only a portion of the marshal's manuscript. There were abridgments, deletions and a fundamental changing of precisely those points which at present (it is a question of facts and speculations) which are portrayed by competent and incompetent authors as discoveries in military history. A career officer, a true patriot, a principled and honest man, Konstantin Konstantinovich always consistently and firmly defended his viewpoint, he was not afraid to tell the truth and it was not his fault that many of his valid judgments and valuable reflections were not made public when they were voiced or written.

We, to a certain degree, are making up for this gap by the current publication which will continue over several issues of the journal. We were aided in this by the marshal's grandsons Konstantin Vilyevich and Pavel Vilyevich Rokossovskiy who kept their grandfather's manuscript in its initial form. Our publications will contain only the pages which were not part of the well-known book. In truth, individual paragraphs have been repeated from it but only in those instances when it was necessary to observe a logical and temporal linkage of narration or with a sharp discrepancy in the proofreading by the publishing house editor and the author's text. In publishing in our journal the unpublished pages of the memoirs of the famous marshal, we inform our readers that the text of the original has been corrected only where stylistic errors or obvious repetitions were encountered.

The manuscript has been prepared for publication by the journal's editor, Capt 1st Rank V.G. Oppokov. [End of Editorial Introduction]

It was the second half of 1940. The Bessarabian question had been settled peacefully....

Having carried out the duties of representative with the troops participating in the liberation campaign in Bessarabia as entrusted to me by the People's Commissar of Defense, MSU S.K. Timochenko, I again resumed command of the V Cavalry Corps.

The end of 1940 came with a new position. By an order of the people's commissar of defense, I was appointed commander of the IX Mechanized Corps which was yet to be constituted. The corps was to include the 20th and 35th Tank Divisions and the 131st Motorized Rifle Division, as well as support units and was to be stationed in the area of Novograd-Volynsk, Slavuta and Shepetovka. It was directly under the Kiev Special Military District (KOVO).

The organization was carried out hurriedly. We realized that the faster the corps was put in combat readiness the better we would carry out our duty to the people and the party. For this reason in the process of organization, we intensely conducted combat training for the subunits, units and the formation as a whole.

All of this was complicated by the circumstance that a large portion of the personnel which had arrived for the formation had to be retrained in armored equipment and the command personnel had to be reinstated.

The combat equipment assigned as weapons was arriving slowly, in insufficient amounts and predominantly of old models. These were the T-26, BT-2 and BT-5 tanks as well as an insignificant number of BT-7. The equipment and weapons being received were considered as training. By the end of the organization the corps was to be supplied with new combat equipment, weapons and motor transport.

We were somewhat disconcerted by the incomprehensible lack of concern which reigned in our upper military leadership. And the pages of the press also instilled complacency. Nothing reminded us of the approaching threat.

Regardless of this, we were concerned. We were strongly depressed by the awareness that the pace of constituting the corps did not correspond to the situation and that events could begin significantly sooner than we assumed. In meeting with the leadership of the corps and the units, during exercises and in private conversations we, without fail, brought up questions related to the international situation and to the events occurring in the West.

Frankly speaking, we, the officers, did not believe that the treaty concluded between the Soviet Union and Germany would not be violated by the latter. At one time, we all had read Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" and even the Führer's revelations found in it were sufficient to persuade one that Nazi Germany would not leave the Soviet Union in peace; having settled with the enemy in the West, it would attack us. The lightning-like defeat of France which was betrayed by its own bourgeoisie as well as the invasion of the Balkans by German troops finally persuaded us that the fatal moment had arrived and we had to be ready for war. All the command and political personnel endeavored to ensure daily combat readiness of their subunits, units and formations, in making systematic adjustments (corrections) as the corps received personnel, equipment and weapons.

In May 1941, the KOVO commander conducted a field trip of front scale and the IX Mechanized Corps also participated. The corps cooperated with the 9th Combined-Arms Army on the sector Rovno—Lutsk—Kovel.

In carrying out a number of tasks, I was able to become acquainted with the frontier terrain on the sector of the corps' probable actions as well as in other sectors. The

state of affairs was alarming. The work of developing the fortified area (UR) had just gotten underway and it was going to take a long time before we could rely on these fortifications in the event of the outbreak of a war. The old UR had been destroyed and abandoned. In no way did such a situation keep within my understanding of military affairs. Inevitably the question arose of what were we planning, how could one explain the lack of concern shown by the General Staff and the KOVO Command?

We, the corps commanders, could see that the situation of the district troops did not correspond to the developing overall military situation.

The hope that the field trip would be the start of measures to bring the troops to a state of combat readiness and their positions into accord with the combat situation of a probable attack by the Germans was not realized.

The analysis of the field trip conducted by the district commander was very pallid and did not provide an opportunity to determine precisely what was the purpose of this measure. Many of the generals and myself personally had a very bad impression of the district commander, Gen M.P. Kirponos. This crucial position was beyond him.

The orders which followed subsequently from the district staff to send the artillery to the artillery ranges which were in the border zone as well as other foolish orders in this situation caused complete bewilderment.

Our corps succeeded in keeping its artillery, showing the possibility of working through the artillery exercises in the corps positions and this saved us in the future.

My observations of everything that we were doing in the period preceding the outbreak of the war led me to lugubrious reflections.

Having participated in World War I from start to finish as well as in the Civil War from the very first days of the October Socialist Revolution, I had gained rich practical combat experience. I knew what a war was in the full sense of this word. In making a great effort to study military affairs, I had gained sufficiently profound knowledge in the area of tactics, operational art and strategy. From my youth, I had been interested in military history literature which depicted the development of military art starting with the campaigns of Alexander the Great and the Roman generals and so forth.

Service in the Red Army and in the troops stationed in the border areas taught me a great deal. In any event, I had a full understanding of all the measures being carried out in the troops and the task of which was to support

(cover) the deployment of the main forces in the event of war. The combat readiness of these troops was always defined not in days but in hours.

For the border areas there was also special conditions which restricted the visiting of these areas by persons not residing there.

Unbelievable things at that time occurred in the border area of the KOVO. Citizens crossed the frontier in both directions. We received persons wanting to take up residence in the USSR. Other not wanting to remain in the Soviet Union departed. In truth, control points were set up for passing the frontier, but movement about in the frontier zone involved numerous unpleasantnesses for us.

Traveling freely in motor vehicles in this area were German officers in civilian clothes who had received permission from our government to seek out and exhume German servicemen who supposedly were buried here.

There were frequent instances of overflights by German aircraft. It was categorically prohibited to fire at them. There was a characteristic instance which occurred during the district field trip. In the Rovno area, a German aircraft made a forced landing and it was apprehended by our soldiers who were stationed nearby. In the aircraft were four German officers in leather coats (without insignias). The aircraft was equipped with modern photographic devices and this the Germans had not been able to destroy (they had not had the time). On the films were pictures of the bridges and railway junctions on the Kiev sector.

Moscow was informed about all of this. To our surprise, we learned that by orders coming from the People's Commissariat of Defense, the aircraft with its crew was ordered to depart immediately escorted (as far as the frontier) by two of our fighters. This is how the center responded to the overtly hostile actions of the Germans.

In studying rather closely the nature of the actions by German troops in operations in Poland and France, I could not figure out what plan of actions our troops had in the given situation in the event of a German attack.

Judging from the concentration of our aviation at the forward airfields and the location of the central dumps in the front zone, this looked like preparations for a leap forward but the position of the troops and the measures conducted in the troops did not correspond to this.

Even when the Germans began to concentrate their troops close to our frontier, shifting them from the West, and this the General Staff and the KOVO Command could not help but know about, we did not make any changes. An atmosphere of unfathomable complacency continued to prevail in the district troops.

In truth, on the level of the higher command personnel this complacency was not shared. During the district field trip, I had spoken with certain corps commanders such as Gens I.I. Fedyuninskiy (a rifle corps commander), S.M. Kondrusev (the commander of a mechanized corps being organized), F.V. Kamkov (the commander of a cavalry corps) and others. It was our opinion that we were on the eve of a war. War could be sniffed in the air and only the blind and deaf did not notice this or did not want to notice....

In the evening of 21 June, someone from our staff had been informed from the border troops that during the night of 20-21 June, a German private first class, a Pole by nationality, had crossed over to our border outpost and informed us that on 22 June the Germans would attack the Soviet Union.

Without receiving any instructions from the KOVO Staff, but being constantly on the alert, we spoke about this amongst ourselves.

No special measures followed, as the alertness in the corps was already sufficient.

Several days prior to receiving this information, it was learned that the KOVO Staff had begun to move from Kiev to Ternopol. No one informed us as to why this came about. Generally speaking, and I should say this again, a certain stillness prevailed and no information came down from above. Our press and radio provided only calming information.

In any event, if some plan did exist it did not correspond to the situation existing by the start of the war and this led to a major defeat for our troops in the initial period of the war.

At around 0400 hours in the morning of 22 June, the staff duty officer handed me a telephone message from the Staff of the 5th Army with orders to open the top secret operational packet which was kept at the corps staff.

The packet contained a directive which instructed that the corps was to be immediately brought to combat readiness and advance on the axis of Rovno—Lutsk and so forth.

By the start of the war, our corps was approximately at half-strength in terms of personnel but did not have the basic equipment of tanks and motorized transport. The supply level of this equipment did not exceed 30 percent of the amount stipulated under the TOE. The equipment was worn out and not fit for extended operation. To put it simply, the corps, as a mechanized formation, was unfit for combat in such a state. Both the KOVO Staff and the General Staff could not help but know of this.

The confusion of the situation forced us to organize reconnaissance and security in accord with the provision for a march in anticipation of the possible encounter of the enemy. Also alarming was the circumstance that with the announcement of the alert and on the march we did not see our aviation in the air although German aviation appeared rather frequently. This was predominantly bombers passing above us at a high altitude and, strangely enough, without a fighter escort.

Soon thereafter we learned about the reasons for this upon seeing our aircraft which had been so unwisely concentrated at airfields located in the border zone and now destroyed and burned up by German aviation.

Having made a 15-km move on the first day, the basic portion of the corps comprised of infantry was completely worn out and had lost any battleworthiness. We had not considered the circumstance that the infantry, deprived of any transport whatsoever, was forced to carry, in addition to personal gear, the light and medium machine guns, the belts and drum magazines for them, the 50- and 81-mm mortars and ammunition.

This circumstance forced us to reduce the move for the infantry to 30-35 km and this also involved a slow-down in the advance of the 35th and 20th so-called Tank Divisions.

The motorized rifle division which had been able to mount its infantry, although with a great overload, on the motor transport and tanks, traveled normally to the destination and by the end of 22 June, was 50 km ahead, reaching the area of Rovno.

In considering this, we decided with the corps staff to move ahead on the axis of the 35th Tank Division in order to monitor the crossing of the latter of the Goryn River to the south of Rovno. The chief of staff, Maj Gen A.G. Maslov issued instructions to prepare a command post and for this a combat engineer platoon mounted on vehicles was sent ahead.

Taking along a battery of 85-mm cannons designed for antitank defense, we moved forward to the position of the proposed command post.

The road ran through an enormous field of heavily overgrown grains which were as tall as a man. Then we began to notice in one or another place, deep in the field, strangely dressed people began appearing either individually or in groups and upon seeing us they quickly took cover. Some were wearing their underwear and others were in military undershirts and trousers or worn out peasant clothing and torn straw hats. These individuals naturally caused suspicion and for this reason, having halted the movement of the staff, I ordered that the hiding persons be caught and we learn who they were.

It turned out that these were the first so-called "persons to escape from encirclement" and they belonged to various troop groups. Among those caught, and there ended up quite a number, were two Red Army men from the platoon which had been sent out to set up our command post.

From their story it became clear that the platoon, in traveling to the designated area, had run into a group of German tanks, motorcycles and mounted infantry and they had been attacked by surprise and surrounded. Several soldiers succeeded in escaping but the remainder supposedly perished. Others questioned endeavored in any possible way to prove that their units had been destroyed and had perished, they by a miracle had survived and assuming that they were deep in the enemy rear decided, in fearing capture, to change their clothes and endeavor to reach their own troops.

And their masquerade was easily explained. Those who were able exchanged their uniform for civilian clothing with the local population and those who did not remained in their underwear. Fear gained the upper hand over common sense, as this primitive trick did not save them from capture as their underwear had military markings and the enemy was not so naive that it did not see this. Subsequently, we saw the bodies of persons executed precisely in this form—in their underwear.

While extolling the mass heroic conduct and feats of the troops, units and individuals in fighting the enemy, one must not overlook the existing instances of panic, shameful flight, desertion of the battlefield and the routes to the front, the maiming and even suicides out of fear of responsibility for one's conduct in battle.

The surprise strike launched by the enemy with enormous forces and its rapid push into the interior of the territory for a certain time stunned our unprepared troops. They were exposed to a shock. It took an extended time to bring them out of this state. The confusion was also furthered by factors of a military and political nature going back to times distant from the start of the war.

The aggregate of important factors and circumstances to a definite degree reduced the battleworthiness of the troops in morale terms, for a certain period it weakened their tenacity and stability and upset particularly those units which were entering battle in a disorganized manner. Some unreliable elements completely lost confidence in their own forces and in the ability to resist the mighty enemy.

Instances were observed when even entire units panicked in coming under a surprise flank attack by a small group of enemy tanks and aviation.... The fear of encirclement and terror of imaginary enemy paratroopers for an extended time were a real scourge. And only where

the command and political personnel was strong did the men fight confidently in any situation, putting up organized resistance to the enemy.

It must also be said that the local press (oblast and republic) and even to a certain degree the central, in describing saboteurs dressed in the uniforms of policemen, border troops, NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] co-workers, commanders and so forth, and which were supposedly inundating the nation, in urging vigilance, at the same time contributed to the spread of false rumors and panic. The faint-hearted persons in the troops took advantage of this.

As an example, let me give a case which occurred in the sector occupied by our corps. During the day, a general was delivered to the corps command post without any weapons, in a torn tunic, exhausted and at the end of his strength. He related that in carrying out an assignment of the front staff he was heading to the Staff of the 5th Army to ascertain the situation, and saw to the west of Rostov motor vehicles carrying our troops but moving rapidly to the east. In a word, the general was witnessing a panic and in order to find out what had caused it, decided to stop one of the vehicles. Ultimately, he succeeded. There were up to 20 persons in the vehicle. Instead of answering the questions of where they were heading and from what unit they came, they forced the general into the truck and began to question him all at once. Then, without giving much thought to it, they declared him to be a saboteur wearing Soviet uniform, they took away his documents and weapons and then announced a death sentence. Managing somehow, the general jumped out and ran into a thick rye field. He made his way through the forest to our command post.

Cases of shooting persons who tried to stop soldiers in flight occurred in other areas, too. Those fleeing from the front obviously were acting out of fear so that they would not be returned there. They themselves explained their conduct by various factors: their units had perished and they remained alone; having broken out of an encirclement, they had been attacked by paratroopers who had landed in the rear; without reaching their unit, they had been fired on in the woods by "tree-top snipers" and so forth.

Very characteristic was the case of the suicide of an officer from one of the regiments of the 20th Tank Division. Etched in my memory are the words of his death note. "The feeling of fear which pursues me that I cannot stand up in battle," it stated, "has forced me to suicide."

Cases of faint-heartedness and instability assumed various forms. The fact that they did not assume a uniform character disconcerted the command and political personnel, the party and Komsomol organizations and forced the taking of extreme measures for preventing these phenomena.

In order to locate and establish contact with the XIX and XXII Mechanized Corps which were to be somewhere ahead or to the side of us, reconnaissance groups were sent out headed by officers from the corps staff in various directions. The corps chief of staff traveled in one such group. Upon returning, he reported that for a brief period of time he was in contact with the chief of staff of the front, Gen M.A. Purkayev. No information had been provided on the situation on the front and from this it followed that the front chief of staff himself clearly knew nothing at that time. This is understandable since contact with the troops had been disrupted by the enemy from the very first hour of the attack. For destroying wire communications it had employed small bombs which were fitted with a crosspiece on a rod. In catching the wire, they exploded instantly. The bombs were dropped in clusters from the aircraft. Moreover, the wires were destroyed by saboteurs trained for this purpose even before the start of the war.

In continuing to the concentration area, we repeatedly observed German aircraft bombing the columns moving along the Lutsk—Rovno Highway and consisting both of troop units as well as the civilian population being evacuated to the east. The disordered movement of vehicles rushing individually or in groups was more reminiscent of a panic flight than an organized evacuation. Orders had to be sent out repeatedly to restore order and check the servicemen who were endeavoring under various pretexts (unjustified) to move further away from the front.

(To be continued)

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Review of Yazov's 'Faithful to the Fatherland'
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in Russian No 4, Apr 89 (signed to press 28 Mar 89)
p 58

[Book review, published under the heading "Criticism and Bibliography," by I.F. Stadnyuk of the book by D.T. Yazov "Verny Otechizne" (Faithful to the Fatherland), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1988, 352 pages with illustrations]

[Text] At present, when there is a process of the shaping of new thinking and a reassessment of values, the Soviet people are showing a sharply increased interest in the historical past of our motherland and of its glorious Armed Forces as well as for the military traditions of our ancestors. Many books which have been written previously about this have ceased to satisfy the readers. As a result of the fact that under the conditions of glasnost, broad strata of the public have been able to become familiar with previously secret documents, customary historical notions have been shaken. Life has not left human thought in peace. Life is constantly stirring it, this thought. The new times pose new problems. Ultimately, what society needs is always created in the form

of ideas, formulas and concepts. Books are an unique mirror which reflect life in the past and present through the prism of the author's thoughts.

Among the recent works which have been brought about by the urgent need of our times, the most noteworthy book is the one written by the Minister of Defense, Army Gen D.T. Yazov, "Verny Otchizne." This is devoted to the heroic history of the USSR Armed Forces. In it the author reflects on the sources of the patriotism of the Soviet people and on the succession of generations which on the abrupt turns of history since time immemorial up to the resent with their bodies have defended the homeland and have devoted and do devote their lives to unstinting service of the fatherland.

The history of the fatherland largely defines our self-awareness. It is certainly far from last in shaping a person's position in life and indoctrinating in him patriotic and internationalist feelings and the qualities of the builder and defender of the new society. Certainly a man begins with love for the fatherland but it is impossible to love what you do not know. And a knowledge of the history of one's people and love for the motherland are a single whole which give rise to the most sacred feelings in man.

The work by D.T. Yazov is a discussion of the present-day defender of the motherland and his remarkable predecessors, near and far in time, those who fought on the brittle ice of Lake Chudo, on the Kulikovo Field, at Poltava, Izmail and at Borodino, at Kakhovka and Tsaritsyn, at Perekop and Volochayevka, at Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk and in other numerous battles against foreign invaders.

The entire structure of the book is in keeping with its overall plan. Consistently, with good awareness and in a precise and clear language, the author describes the most memorable events in the military history of our motherland. He devotes many pages to the military art of the Kievan Prince Svyatoslav, Aleksandr nevskiy, Dmitriy Donskoy, Kuzma Minin and Dimitriy Pozharskiy, Bogdan Khmelnitskiy, Peter I, A.V. Suvorov, M.I. Kutuzov and P.S. Nakhimov.

In the work particular attention has been given to the post-October period. The description of the Civil War and the combating of the interventionists, the events on the Chinese East Railroad, the international aid to the Spanish and Chinese peoples, the rebuff of the Japanese aggressors at Khasan and the Khalkhin-Gol, the Soviet-Finnish War and, finally, the Great Patriotic War is full of vivid examples of courage, heroism and the combat skill of the Soviet military and partisans and the valor of the rear workers. The readers are presented with a galaxy of outstanding Soviet military leaders. Our mistakes, setbacks and defeats are not concealed, particularly in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War, their causes are analyzed, lessons are mentioned and reference is made to the evidence of the interpreters of history in the

foreign press and this is particularly important for the reader who has been confused by dubious judgments on the last war by certain of our historians.

D.T. Yazov emphasizes the necessity of a careful attitude toward history generally and military in particular and he convincingly shows the importance of a responsible and to the highest degree objective approach to treating the past of our motherland.

In the last very long chapter entitled "Like the Apple of Your Eye," from a position of the new political thinking and the defensive nature of Soviet military doctrine, he examines the urgent questions of defending socialism under modern conditions. A detailed description is given of the development and states of the Armed Services and combat arms. The tasks of the commanders, the political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations of the units and ships in increasing combat readiness and strengthening military discipline of the personnel are disclosed from the viewpoint of perestroyka in the Army and Navy. This chapter is the foundation which bears the rich edifice of the entire book "Verny Otchizne."

The book is well designed and is illustrated. It provides numerous photographs as well as reproductions of maps and diagrams of combat for the most memorable battles and engagements. All of this makes it a good consultant and assistant for the most diverse categories of readers. Undoubtedly, it will be beneficial for the preinduction youth and for the military instructors of schools.

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Partial Biography of S.A. Pugachev

*00010010h VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL
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[Autobiography of Semen Andreyevich Pugachev]

[Text] [Editorial Introduction] Semen Andreyevich Pugachev (1889- 1943), was a Soviet military leader. He was a member of the CPSU from 1934. He completed the General Staff Academy in 1914. He was a participant in World War I as a captain. In April 1918, he volunteered for the Red Army. From May 1918 through January 1919, he worked on the staff of the Urals Military District. From January through April 1919, he was the acting chief of staff and military instructor of the same district. Subsequently, he was the chief of the operations department of the staff of the 2d Army and the chief of the operations directorate of the staff of the Special Group of Forces of the Southern Front and the Staff of the Southeastern Front. From January 1920, he was the chief of the operations directorate and from March 1920 through May 1921, the chief of staff of the Kazan Front. For working out the operational plans to defeat the Denikin troops in the Northern Caucasus, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner (1921). From June 1921, he was the chief of staff of the 2d Caucasus

Army. From August 1923 through April 1924, he was in command of the Turkestan Front. For fighting the Basmacks (1924) he was awarded the Order of the Red Star 1st Degree of the Bukhara NSR [People's Socialist Republic] (1925) and the Order of the Red Banner of the Khorezm NSR (1925). Subsequently, he held command posts and was a corps commander. He perished during the years of the repressions. [End of Editorial Introduction]

I was born on 13 February 1889. I completed the full gymnasium course in 1906, the Alekseyev School in 1908 and the General Staff Academy in 1914.

My father was a gymnasium teacher, he died in 1916 and my mother died in 1889.

I am a career serviceman. Upon completing the academy, I served in positions of the General Staff on the staffs of the divisions, corps and front. My last rank was captain. My last position was chief of the operations department of the staff of the Northern Front. I did not serve in the White and foreign armies.

During the October Revolution I was on the front. During the period of the demobilization of the old army, I was a consultant on the Directorate of the Northern Front (Pozern, Shcherbakov and Krutov) and was coopted into the Pskov Soviet of Worker, Peasant and Soldier Deputies.

I volunteered for the Red Army in March 1918* for the position of clerk of the staff of the Urals Military District where subsequently from March 1918 I held the post of chief of the section of formations and the chief of the administrative directorate.

In April 1919, I was sent to the staff of the Eastern Front and appointed to the position of chief of staff of the 2d Army and in which I participated in the fight against Kolchak until the taking of Yekaterinburg. In July 1919, I was appointed the chief of the Operations Directorate of the Staff of the Special Group of the Southern Front and then the staff of the Southeastern Front. In February 1920, I was appointed chief of staff of the Caucasus Front. Upon the break-up of the latter in May 1921, I was appointed chief of staff of the Separate Caucasus Army.

I participated in the fight against Denikin and Wrangel, in the sovietization of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia as well as in the fight against the Menshevik, Dashnak and Mussavit Bands.** In June 1923, I was appointed commander of the Turkestan Front and participated in the elimination of the Basmacks in Central Asia. By the time that the command of the front was turned over to Comrade Levandovskiy, only the bands of Eastern Bukhara (Ibragim-bek) remained unliquidated. In April 1924, I was appointed commander of the Caucasus Red Banner Army. In August-September 1924, I eliminated the Menshevik uprising in Georgia.

In February 1925, I was appointed the deputy chief of staff of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] and in this position served until September 1928. Upon a decree of the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissioners], I was appointed to a Soviet delegation for the preparatory commission on the reduction and elimination of weapons under the League of Nations. As part of the designated delegation, I was sent to Geneva for the 4th and 5th sessions of the commission in November-December 1927 and March-April 1928.

Over a period of 3.5 months (September-December 1928), I carried out particularly important assignments for the people's commissar for military and naval affairs and the Chairman of the USSR RVS [Revolutionary Military Council].

From December 1928 through March 1931, I was the assistant commander and chief of staff of the Urals Military District. From March 1931 to the present I have been the chief of staff of the Central Asian Military District.

During my service I have been a member of the Tiflis and Kharkov City Soviets, a member of the TsIK [Central Executive Committee] of Georgia, Turkestan, the Transcaucasus Republic and the Ukraine.

Tashkent. 15 March 1932

Chief of Staff of the Central Asian Military District
(Pugachev)

Footnotes

*Thus in text.

**Thus in document. The Mussavitist bands are meant.

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New Features for Portrait of D.M. Karbyshev.

1904-1905

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pp 77- 78

[Article, published under the heading "Chronicle, Facts, Findings," by L.Ye. Reshin, volunteer science associate at the memorial complex of the Brest Hero Fortress: "The First Feat (New Features for the Portrait of D.M. Karbyshev. 1904-1905)"]

[Text] The life and fate of Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen Engr Trps D.M. Karbyshev (1880-1945) continue to touch the hearts of people. The feat of the legendary general, one of the organizers and active participants in the Resistance Movement in the Nazi death camps, is an effective example for the indoctrination of the youth in a spirit of loyalty to the motherland.¹

In working on a re-editing of the documentary story "General Karbyshev" written by my deceased father², I examined the Russian periodicals for 1904-1905 and found the first article about D.M. Karbyshev³ relating to the period of the Russo-Japanese War and which had never been employed in Soviet and foreign literature. The value of this article is all the greater as it gives direct speech by D.M. Karbyshev, perhaps the only case of this in all his life.

On 30 December 1903, D.M. Karbyshev was sent to Nikolsk-Ussuriyskiy for organizing the 4th Telegraph Company. As of this day he was actually involved in the Russo-Japanese War. According to a circular of the General Staff of 21 April 1904, the organizing of the 4th Company was completed on 9 February 1904. On 14 March 1904, D.M. Karbyshev crossed the frontier of Manchuria and on the 21st as part of this company joined the battalion in the town of Laoyang.⁴ On 29 March, as part of the same company, he was sent to the town of Tashichao to the disposition of the chief of staff of the I Siberian Army Corps. On 21 April 1904, D.M. Karbyshev was appointed the chief of the cable section of the 4th Telegraph Company.

Brief reference information. In accord with the reorganization of the engineer troops carried out at the end of the 19th Century, each army corps included a reinforced combat engineer battalion which consisted of three combat engineer companies, one telegraph company and a light pole unit for communications. In the war against Japan, a significant amount of modern communications equipment was required. Some 489 telegraph units, 188 units for cavalry units, 331 central telephone exchanges and 6,459 magnetoelectric telephone units were sent to the troops. In addition, the troops received 90 large and 29 field spark telegraph sets, 548 heliographs and 553 optical telegraphs. They used 7,321 sajenes (1 sajene = 2,134 m) of overhead telegraph cable, 1,540 sajenes of underground cable and 9,798 sajenes of telephone wire. The losses of the engineer troops were high and by the war's end, their personnel had been cut virtually in half.⁵

At that time, the heliograph was one of the main means of communications and this possessed both a number of advantages (independence of power supply, simplicity and mobility) as well as essential shortcomings (dependence upon weather conditions, give-away features and so forth). In addition to special knowledge, the operating of these units also required courage. The easily spotted heliographs came under intense enemy fire as the enemy endeavored to neutralize and disrupt communications.

The service record of D.M. Karbyshev describes the given combat episode in the following manner: "...On 4 June 1904, he was sent as liaison with Port Arthur where, being cut off by the enemy, he assembled the Cossack posts, retreated and linked up with the battalion." However, witnesses ("Ilyustrirovannaya letopis...." [Illustrated Chronicle...], No. VI, p 126) stated that the designated heliograph was set up on 27 May 1904 and

the starting up of telegraph communication was on the 19th. Obviously, the entry in the service record was dated after D.M. Karbyshev had joined up with the battalion as is clear from the publication found providing the fullest description of those events.

The actions of the young Lt Karbyshev who showed cool-headedness and valor and who fought his way out of the encirclement with his subordinates and servicemen from other units with their equipment and weapons merited the greatest possible commendation. By the Order of the Deputy in the Far East No. 657 of 2 September 1904, D.M. Karbyshev received his first combat decoration, the Order of St. Vladimir 4th Degree with swords and a ribbon. This was one of the most honorific officer combat decorations. Fellow servicemen subsequently recalled that he greatly valued this combat decoration on which was inscribed the motto "Use, Honor and Glory."

In 1904-1905, D.M. Karbyshev was awarded another four combat orders: St. Stanislav 3d Degree and ribbons (4 November 1904), St. Anne 3d Degree with swords and ribbon (2 January 1905), St. Stanislav 2d Degree with swords (2 February 1905). In addition, on 27 March D.M. Karbyshev again received the Order of St. Stanislav 2d Degree for distinction in the fighting from 8 February through 6 March 1905 (in the first instance for the January fighting of 1905). Since a second awarding of this order of the same degree was not permitted, after discovering the error by the College of Arms, this decoration was replaced with the Order of St. Anne 4th Degree and this was designed to be worn on the officer's personal weapon. On the sword hilt, they engraved the inscription: "For Bravery." The changing of the decorations shows that D.M. Karbyshev, like his immediate superiors, did not know of the fact of its awarding, otherwise there would not have been a repeat submission.

The facts given in the article which are previously unknown to a broad range of readers again persuasively show that the feat of D.M. Karbyshev carried out by him during the years of the Great Patriotic War was a natural one.

The military and human experience gained during the years of the Russo-Japanese War and the hardships which he shared with his soldiers being next to them from the time the subunit was organized tempered his character and this could not help but appear in his subsequent life and service.

Footnotes

1. Some 293 institutions in the nation took part in the movement "Young Karbyshevers" which was active in the mid-1950s. The movement was led by the Directorate of the Chief of Engineer Troops of the USSR Ministry of Defense (Col G.V. Gladkikh), the Academy

imeni V.V. Kuybyshev (Maj Gen (Res) G.V. Shevchenko) and the Memorial Complex of the Brest Hero Fortress (Col (Res) V.A. Abramov).

2. Yevgeniy Grigoryevich Reshin (1892-1983), member of the CPSU from February 1917, in 1918-1919, the political commissar of the 6th Military Field Construction (Chief, D.M. Karbyshev) of the Eastern Front.

3. "The fighting at Wangfanggao, 1st and 2d June, "Ilyustrirovannaya letopis russko-yaponskoy voyny" [Illustrated Chronicle of the Russo-Japanese War], Izd. Novnogo zhurnala inostrannoy literatury F.I. Bulgakova, St. Petersburg, No VI, 1904, pp 110-122.

4. Here and below, the dates relating to the Russo-Japanese War have been taken from the service record of D.M. Karbyshev, TsVIMAIV i VS [Central State Archives for the History of the Engineer Troops and Air Forces], folio D.M. Karbyshev, file 3041.

5. L.G. Beskrovnyy, "Armiya i flot Rossii v nachale XX v." [The Russian Army and Navy at the Beginning of the 20th Century], Moscow, Nauka, 1986, pp 23, 147.

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Wife's Biography of Blyukher

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pp 79- 86

[Article, published under the heading "Remembrances of the Personal," by Glafira Blyukher: "Six Years With Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher"; continuation, for first installment see this journal, No 3, 1989]

[Text] During the years of my far-distant childhood, our Khabarovsk was a small town with the population of around 30,000 persons. Located on the bank of the freely-flowing Amur, the city rose over the river on three steep hills (Artilleriyskaya [Artillery], Srednyaya [Middle] and Voyennaya [Military]). The main streets ran along the slopes of the tops of these hills: Tikhmenyevskaya (now Seryshev Street), Muravyev-Amurskaya (now K. Marx Prospect) and Baranovskaya (now Lenin Street). All these three streets stretched from the Amur into the town and the central streets, Muravyev-Amurskaya ended at the cemetery.

Running between Mounts Artilleriyskaya and Srednyaya was the Cherdymovka Stream and between Srednyaya and Voyennaya, the Plyusinka Stream and both emptied into the Amur. All the remaining streets of the town ran parallel to the Amur, intersecting the main thoroughfares. At the start of Muravyev-Amurskaya on the square there was the very impressive-sized and very beautiful Zhivoy [Living] Cathedral and on the slope of Mount Artilleriyskaya by the Cherdymovka River was the Mertvyy [Dead] Cathedral. The building of the cadet corps was located on Tikhmenyevskaya Street. On the

central street, virtually all the buildings including institutions, stores, the private merchant houses and the gymnasium were of red brick while close to the cemetery stood a single-story wooden house in which was the town's only dye works.

Pedestrians could cross the Cherdymovka and Plyusinka Streams by large stones, planks and hummocks at virtually any point on the stream while transport crossed only over the bridges, across the Cherdymovka on Popovskaya and Zaparin Streets and across the Plyusinka over the bridge near the market, close to the Amur.

Coming to the market in large numbers were natives in all sorts of boats, some filled with live fish. The fish splashed, trying to get back to the Amur waters, with their scales flashing blindingly in the sun. The sidewalks in the town were wooden and not always in good condition. Through the dusty, soft ruts of the roads trod by horses and the wheels of cabs and carts, hordes of boys boldly "drove" in any direction through the town.

In Khabarovsk were many Chinese. Among them were also women but few of them, basically the wives, of shopkeepers. Their feet looked like little triangular blocks and they walked literally on their heels. We, the kids, knew that the feet of Chinese girls were deformed from childhood so that when adult they could not flee when beaten. The Chinese kept small shops, they worked as porters, they built fences and traded. They were known for their industriousness.

In 1922, we the children, could not understand the events of the Civil War but we already were well aware that there were Reds and Whites. Child psychology was simple, as everywhere: what the adults feared, we feared and what the adults liked we liked. In playing we sang little songs about the topics of the day, with the text slightly altered according to the circumstances. For example:

I am sitting on a barrel, And a mouse is under the barrel.
Soon the Reds will come And the rat will be white.

Or:

Soon the Whites will come, And the rat will be red.

...On that day on Bolshanka, that is, Muravyev-Amurskaya Street, there was a crowd of people. My father and I were standing near the gray circular, large cement column which was at the corner of Bolshaya Popovskaya Street and to which they glued posters, as well as certain orders and announcements. Coming around Cossack Hill, which cut across Tikhmenyevskaya Street, along Popovskaya (now Kalinin Street) descended a broad "ribbon" moving toward us, toward the center. Everyone was watching intensely. The "ribbon," in moving, stretched out and finally could be clearly seen: it was men marching in ranks and these were troops. At the

center of the first line they had stretched a broad banner on a very long pole. It was the regiments of the People's Army, the victors in the Volochayevka fighting who were to occupy Khabarovsk. V.K Blyukher said about them later: "The Volochayevka episode showed the entire world how people who want to be free can fight."

At the same time, the White Troops which were on the roadway of Muravyev-Amurskaya Street, not far from the bridge where we all were, turned toward the station and marched toward it. The soldiers were in long gray coats, with wrappings on their legs, their heads were wrapped in hoods the ends of which flapped in the wind. Only much later did I understand the entire historical importance of what I had seen on that noteworthy day.

"Having lost Volochayevka, the Whites could no longer hold out on any new positions. On 14 February, the People's Revolutionary Army liberated Khabarovsk. The battered and demoralized remnants of the former White Guard Army rapidly pulled back into the Maritime Province under the protection of the Japanese bayonets."

Our family moved to Khabarovsk in 1920 from the village of Krasnaya Rechka (this was approximately 15 km from the town) and where I was born, the last child in the family. We moved into a private apartment at 49 Artilleriyskaya Street.

My father, Luka Trifonovich Bezverkhov, a disabled veteran of the Russo-Japanese War 2d Group, received a pension of 11 rubles a month and worked in the Krasnyy Trud Disabled Veterans Artel; he was illiterate. My mother, Praskovya Grigoryevna, was a housewife and slightly literate. There were four children, the older brother and sister had studied 1 or 2 years in the gymnasium but due to the lack of money of our parents they had to give up their studies. The second brother and I studied in school under Soviet power, gratis. Our father did not go to church as he did not like priests, but did believe in God. He did not recognize Soviet power. "I recognize only Lenin, Kalinin and Litvinov," he said. When we were older, we children could not understand why he respected precisely Litvinov. Our father and the minister of foreign affairs, a diplomat!?

Guests were rare in our house but if they did come, for example, our mother's sister or the neighbor cobbler, then our father wanted my sister Lida to sing the "International," and she did standing by our parent's bed leaning against the back. She would never sing any other songs except the "International" at our father's request. Why?...

Our amazing, beautiful Amur and the woods behind the town, behind the rail junction and the cemetery, were a joy and source of happiness for our childhood and youth, and for me all my life in the home Far East.

And our bluff at the center of the municipal garden? At its foot, the water boiled, raged, forming foamy crests and whirlpools, and launches were not permitted to cross it against the current, let alone even the boldest boatmen. Only a few of them risked it but at a very respectful distance from the seething waters at the base of the cliff. And we all knew that as soon as we felt you were being pulled in when swimming, you had to dive into the center of the whirlpool in order to come up next to it, otherwise you would perish. The whirlpool pulled you in, spun you around and swallowed you.

On Sundays, launches plied from the right bank to the left low one, delivering holiday-goers to the sandy banks of the Amur with overgrown thickets far from the river.

The winter Amur showed us its delights but also frightened us with the "polynias" which were areas of Amur water which were dusted with snow but did not freeze over the entire winter. If you fell through you were lost as you would disappear under the ice. In the spring there was the sludge ice. Spring was on the way. The person to notice the first cracks would be the first to announce: "The Amur has moved!" It was very sunny, the sky was high, blue, blue, deep. The Amur became gloomy, dark and heavy. Then came the sludge ice. You could hear the cracking of the ice and in the middle of the Amur would be relatively calm ice floes. They could be large or small with watery blue open areas, and then on our right bank, to the left of the cliff, piling up on the shore would be great mounds of ice, piling one on the other, and they could not float away as the cliff blocked the way with its base stretching out into the Amur.

The Amur cliff was a historic place in Khabarovsk as on 5 September 1918, Austro-Hungarian musicians were executed here. There were 16 of them, former prisoners of war who sympathized with Soviet power....

In the municipal garden, at the top of the cliff you could stand for hours, you could stand and watch, watch and be silent. This was a garden where at one time, according to the stories of the elders, "soldiers and dogs were not permitted" and this was written at its entrance.

On the central mountain of the town, Mount Srednyaya, there was a descent to the Amur along a wooden stairway. At that time, the Trade Union Swimming Pool was located there, and on the other side of the cliff there was the municipal swimming area with Dinamo Beach.

The Red Army Club on Shevchenko Street was located in the building of the former municipal duma [parliament]. Opposite it stood an old building in which A.P. Chekhov had halted on his way to Sakhalin. Further down, closer to the Cherymovka Stream, was the regional Arsenyev Museum and in its courtyard they had mounted an enormous whale skeleton.

At 47 Artilleriyskaya Street, next to us, stood a low two-story merchant house of red brick which until 1929 housed the Chinese Consulate. Our courtyards were separated by a very tall solid wall of red brick, and along the street there stretched a fence, also brick, but lower, framed with flowery wire decorations with flat yellow iron circles. The gates were spear-shaped, iron, with the same decorations as on the fence.

In 1929, there was a conflict on the Chinese East Railroad and the co-workers from the Chinese Consulate quickly left the building, they quickly loaded themselves into the horse-drawn cabs. These events were extraordinary not only for us, the Far Easterners.... Soon thereafter the "Chinese House" became the headquarters of the commander of the Special Far Eastern Army (ODVA), Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher.

I remember well the funeral procession moving from the pier down toward the square (now Komsomol Square) on Srednyaya Hill where Muravyev-Amurskaya Street began. They were carrying four coffins with the bodies of the Red Armymen, the first victims in the fighting against the Chinese White bandits near Lahasusu, and then there was the memorial ceremony and the burial of the fallen on Freedom Square (now Lenin Square). The streets were full of people and the shaken crowd talked among itself, they cried and some said that Blyukher was among those carrying the first coffin, although in the thick of the crowd I did not see him.

That was the beginning of the armed conflict on the KVZhD [Chinese East Railroad]. At that time, much was said about the commander of the ODVA, the newspapers TOZ and TREVOGA wrote about the brilliant victory as did the radios using loudspeakers set up on the streets. Later on, participants in the fighter, Red Navymen from the Amur Military Flotilla described the events to the school children, Pioneers and Komsomol members. They themselves seemed heroes to us. The fame of Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher rose. They spoke about him everywhere with proud affection, and in our family, too. Later, when the conflict on the KVZhD had been resolved with the complete defeat of the Chinese troops and the ODVA had become the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army (OKDVA), I still was unable to imagine Vasiliy Konstantinovich as an ordinary man.

On 22 December 1929, the signing of the agreement between the USSR and China was held in Khabarovsk, and this provided for the elimination of the conflict and the restoring of the status quo ante on the KVZhD.

A participant in the fighting on the KVZhD at the town of Lahasusu, Col (Ret) Safronov on 28 November 1963 described in his letter: "I will never forget the day when Vasiliy Konstantinovich met us, the victors at Lahasusu in Khabarovsk as the pier. He was dressed in a leather coat. Ferries with soldiers from the 2d Amur Red Banner Division were mooring at the pier. Thousands of inhabitants from Khabarovsk had come down to meet us. The

first to go on shore were the men with stretchers on which lay the heroes who had given up their lives at the fighting at Lahasusu. Army Commander Blyukher went up to the first stretcher on which lay a deceased hero and relieved the soldier.... At that time, I was a company commander."

In his article published in PRAVDA on 30 November 1980, "Heroes Live Over the Centuries," V.I. Chuykov wrote:

"It was essential to rein in the unrestrained Chinese militarists and thwart their provocative actions and attempt to initiate war in the Far East. Such difficult tasks could be carried out by such a mature politician, diplomat and military figure as V.K. Blyukher. In August 1929, a decision was taken to unite all the troops stationed in the Far East in the Special Far Eastern Army under his command. The Soviet government, having exhausted all peaceful opportunities, was forced to defend the sovereignty of the motherland and the peaceful labor of our citizens by military means. The units of the Special Far Eastern Army and the Amur Naval Flotilla went into action.

"First of all, attacks were made against the fortifications of Lahasusu and against the Sungari Flotilla which frequently interrupted peaceful navigation along the Amur from the mouth of the Sungari. However, this counterstrike did not bring the Chinese militarists to their senses. The raids and shelling from the Chinese troops continued. Moreover, the Chinese Command organized two army groups: one in the area of the towns of Manchuria and Chalainor and a second in the area of Mishan-fu in the aim of an organized offensive into the Transbaykal area on the Lake Baykal Axis and in the Maritime on the Vladivostok Axis.

"I happened to be a witness of how attentively and profoundly V.K. Blyukher analyzed the combat situation and how steadily and tenaciously he carried out the adopted decisions and, having achieved victory, showed magnanimity for the enemy soldier masses. Here is just one episode.

"In the morning of 18 November, a decisive storming was carried out on the town of Chalainor. The retreating Chinese were fleeing in mobs of thousands to the east, to Hailar, across the ice of the Argun River. Each shell fired from a gun mowed down these mobs like grass. Vasiliy Konstantinovich ordered the artillery to cease fire, saying: 'Let all enemies know that no one will be permitted to attack Soviet territory.' And 2 days later, he did approximately the same thing with the garrison of Manchuria, occupying the town virtually without bloodshed. For leadership of the ODVA and its combat operations, V.K. Blyukher was awarded the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Star No. 1. The Special Far Eastern Army became Red Banner."

After the conflict on the KVZhD, life in the town resumed its normal course as did that in our family. My elder sister Lida, a Komsomol member (she joined the Komsomol secretly from our parents, particularly our father) and worked as the head of a library in a Komsomol club. When she announced to our parents that she was getting married, the parents grew excited and wanted to do something for her. Our father said that he would buy a tea service (for 11 rubles) on credit from his Krasnyy Trud Cooperative, while mother busied herself with underclothes, pillows, a blanket, while I wanted to share everything with her.... But Lida refused everything, reminding us that our parents had still not repaid the credit for the winter coat bought for her the previous year and that she and Peter were working and would get everything themselves and that after her there were still three other children....

A fight broke out over these disagreements, our father was insulted, mother cried and my brother Anatoliy and I fled from the house. Ultimately, our sister hired a carter, took a woven basket with her "property," two piles of books and left. There could be no question of a wedding, no one gave a celebration, as this was considered Philistine, just as it was considered Philistine to wear wedding clothes, wedding rings and so forth. Later with her husband, Petr Gladkikh, one of the first organizers of the Komsomol in the Far East, my sister moved to the city of Tsaritsyn (now Volgograd).

My elder brother Nikolay left for Sakhalin to earn a living, our father went on working, Tolya [Anatoliy] and I helped our mother and in the summer tried to earn a bit. It was our duty to get the milk and bread, standing in lines often from night. We read a great deal, we liked W. Scott, A. Dumas, and I also liked Charskaya and all the books I could lay my hands on.

In 1931, I was studying at the rabfak [worker faculty] in the 4th year at the Far Eastern Medical Institute (DVGMI). By this time, the cemetery had long been moved out of the town and in its place was Freedom Square on the edge of which stood the building of the former real school, while to the right was the Main Post Office with long, close-standing, low buildings from dark red brick. The Zhivoy Cathedral was destroyed and the building material from it went into the superstructure of two floors of the building of the former gymnasium, where the medical institute was located on the first two floors. We, the youth, were the witnesses of all events occurring in the town.

In the winter of 1930, my friend at the rabfak Natasha Derbedeneva and I, in studying in the evenings on the rabfak, went to work through the labor exchange at the census institution. After completing the rabfak, we planned to continue our studies and with the true daring of youth for whom there were no limits! we sent our applications to institutes in Moscow and Leningrad:

architecture and medicine. Where did this idea come from? And particularly in two Far Easterners? How did we decide on this? Who knows...

We received invitations from both institutes and for this reason we went to work in order to earn our travel expenses. My parents could not raise such amounts, as I knew.

For some reason in the spring of 1932, my mother sent me on household matters to the family of the driver of Vasiliy Konstantinovich who was living in the courtyard of the mansion in a small two-apartment house where there had been a school at the Chinese Consulate.

...The years passed and maturing I did not give any more thought to whether this remarkable so-beloved V.K. Blyukher was like an ordinary man, but all the same.... No, I thought, he could not be ordinary!

In a small kitchen, by a round iron stove painted red and then lacquered, I was standing dressed in a black cotton skirt with buttons down the side seam, according to the fashion of those times, with a pink-knit jersey with white collar, cuffs, belt and a lacing at the collar, and given to me by my sister.

The door opened, a man came in, said hello and asked where Vasya Zhdanov (the driver) was, and asked that the car be ready at such and such a time. He was above medium height, solidly built, brown-haired, with a pleasant baritone voice, piercing blue eyes, very neatly shaven, thick-haired, straight and combed back, and regular facial features. His eyebrows were wide and thick. He wore a blue satin Russian shirt, the three top buttons of the collar were undone, a white twisted silk belt with tassels at the side, regulation dark trousers and on his feet unusual light brown, soft comfortable house-slippers and in his hands keys on a ring. Who was he? Vasiliy Konstantinovich? Blyukher?

At that moment, Mariya, the wife of Vasya Zhdanov, turned to me and said my name Grafa.

The man who had come in suddenly turned to me—he was already going out—and somewhat surprised asked:

"Grafa?"

"Yes, Grafa."

"No, but why Graf-fa?" he said, moving closer and frowning, with a hint of clear dissatisfaction or dislike in his voice, fingering the keys in his hand.

"That is my name. My real name is Glafira, but at home I am called Grafa," I replied with a feeling of shame for my name and for the tone of that strange man. And suddenly he said:

"I do not like that name, it reeks of counterrevolution," he said, stopping a minute and then went out.

I was bewildered. It had been he, Blyukher....

The second meeting with Vasiliy Konstantinovich was in the courtyard of his house. I was hurrying home, having carried out some household chore for my mother. My path was blocked by Vasiliy Konstantinovich, in coming out from the little garden by the house wearing the same blue Russian shirt as in our first encounter. He said that they were going to have a "shock worker day" (volunteer Saturday workday) in the garden and proposed that I take part. Had I misheard the adult?

In the garden was Seva, the elder son of Vasiliy Konstantinovich and a niece Nina, the daughter of his sister Liza who had been "used up" by consumption after the births of her children, as Blyukher said later. The children were 9 years old. Everything was so simple in the "shock worker day" and even festive, we laughed a great deal and Vasiliy Konstantinovich himself was so simple and cordial and again I did not feel the famous Blyukher in him. Possibly it was because he was not in uniform. And not as he was in the portrait photographs.

Soon thereafter, our family moved to the other side of the town, beyond Orlovo Field, where the Ussuri River flows into the Amur. We had moved into a small house of two little rooms and a narrow kitchen with a stove. My parents gave me the smaller room, my father and mother took the larger room and Tolya's bed was put in the kitchen by the window.

Father was working in the Krasnyy Trud Cooperative, he smoked fish for the TsRK (Central Worker Cooperative) the main store of which was located on the corner of Artilleriyskaya and Muravyev-Amurskaya Streets and he also marinated pumpkin and salted cucumbers in barrels and square metal containers. This new employment for father served as the reason for the move of our family to the new place.

Once there was a lesson in mathematics and someone called me out of the classroom. It was the assistant of V.K. Blyukher, Iustin Maksimovich Krysko, who handed me a letter from Vasiliy Konstantinovich and a ticket to the Red Army Club where they were giving the play "Armored Train 14-69" of Vsevolod Ivanov staged by the MKhAT [Moscow Art Theater] imeni Gorki. In the note Vasiliy Konstantinovich advised me to see this as worthwhile. In the Red Army Club, sitting in the front row were Vasiliy Konstantinovich, Seva and military comrades whom I, of course, did not know and obviously their wives. The seats were not numbered and I found a place in the middle of the auditorium. After the second intermission I was one of the last to return from the garden which was at the Club into the auditorium. At the doors of the lobby which one had to pass stood Vasiliy Konstantinovich with a group of his comrades and Vsevolod [Seva] who said hello in a friendly manner with

a nod of the head. But Blyukher suddenly told his son to say hello properly. We shook hands and both of us broke out laughing. Oh, these fine points!

After the end of the performance, completely confused after the meeting, I was hurrying out of the theater, but on the street by the very entrance again stood Vasiliy Konstantinovich. He stopped me but I do not remember what we spoke about. Seva and I left quickly and at the corner I said farewell to Seva, I crossed the street, went down quickly to the Plyusninka, across the bridge and Orlovo Field, home. It was a very warm evening.

And again during school I received an envelope with the note: "Grafa! I would very much like to see you. I am again in a period of personal loneliness and cold, and I would like at least a little unselfish friendly conversation with a person in whom one feels confidence. My observations suggest to me that I could find such a friend in you. I was hoping for a brief conversation before. In sending a ticket to the DKA [Red Army Club], I was hoping that there would be a brief conversation there. But acquaintances intervened. It is difficult for me to be in public places without others around who may possibly be outstanding but also boring. To enter into a conversation with you that evening would have meant to create conversations around you and myself and this I did not want.... If you don't want to come or feel this awkward for yourself, then let me know in a note. V.K."

We began to meet at Vasiliy Konstantinovich's house. At that time, he was living with his mother Anna Vasilyevna, his elder son Vsevolod and a niece Nina. During days off we went out of the city and spent evenings developing and printing photographs. Everything was amazingly simple. There were many recollections and tales by Vasiliy Konstantinovich and the grandmother, talks about children's matters and school.

Upon parting the next meeting was never set between us and I would not have been surprised if it had not happened. But Vasiliy Konstantinovich would write: "Again I write, again I ask you to come today...V.K."

I remember the last day of school at the rafak. In the auditorium there was noise and happiness and the students of our 4th year had assembled on the Amur, at the cliff to celebrate the end of school. And all of a sudden to the surprise of everyone I refused to go and remained alone at the institute waiting for letters. I longed for them, these letters, and I was tortured by the joy of waiting for news and meetings and frightened by what was happening, what was not understood and still unrecognized by me....

Our meetings grew more frequent and I began to have second thoughts. Only once did I refuse a meeting. I do not know whether Vasiliy Konstantinovich felt my emotional distress or whether he himself was fighting with his growing feeling. But he wrote again.

"Grafa! The rain is pelting down and the thunder is rolling—this I love, this is all good. But alone, believe me, I am lonesome. Although today I am content with myself as I did a good deal of work. Yesterday, in leaving, you said.... I waited for a long time hoping that you would come back. Now I see that I was not right and I have neither the qualities let alone the rights for this. You left with your usual smart pace and when I went out on the balcony, you were no longer there.... In life there are little explainable phenomena and you are one of these. Why do I long for you and for your society? This happens because you merit not only human affection but also great human comradeley respect. You have a great of soul, you are good, bright and one has merely to look into your eyes to believe this firmly. At times, you consider this quality of yours a minus and of course you are still an "unformed girl" and all lies ahead of you. I felt yesterday that you had come for the last time. I would see you no more and this gives me the right to send you this note. Old, however you like, but the past remains behind you.... You have forgotten the old Russian saying 'Don't do what is not yours to do....' Thank you for everything, for all the brief and dear meetings. Is that not so, Grafa? V. (better without the K) but the K remains."

And again: "Grafa! When you left I vowed not to ask about another meeting. But, remaining alone, the need to see you becomes insurmountable. So it was today.... Give up your evening study for me and come earlier and you can make up what you missed. I will be leaving soon and will cease bothering you with requests.... The new book by Gladkov 'Novaya Zemlya' [New Land] is waiting for you. V.K."

Or: "...If my entreaties have not yet become hateful to you, then I beg of you to come around today.... If you find this inconvenient, we can have a chat in the car, just say where I should meet you. I believe that you will not refuse me a meeting, particularly as tomorrow morning I am leaving Khabarovsk for 8-10 days. V.K."

Once we were amazed by the unexpected news that all the students who had completed the rafak had been assigned to our own medical institute where we had been studying and they would not give out the documents on completing the rafak to anyone. What could we do? What about our studies in Moscow and Leningrad? Natasha could be helped by her mother but what about me? My parents and friends would not go to the institute.... I could not share my concerns with anyone, neither with Lida Loginova, nor with Natasha or even Tatyana (Tatyana Nikolayevna Burova), at that time a 28-year-old woman whom we, the young people, particularly loved for her kindness and industriousness in her studies which did not come easily for her.

In the arising situation I had no way out except to ask Vasiliy Konstantinovich. He knew the rector of our institute as he had treated him. But how could I ask? Certainly, it was not a good thing to take advantage of an acquaintanceship and ask something.... But finally when

I met Vasiliy Konstantinovich I told him everything about the plans of mine and Natasha's to go study in Moscow and Leningrad, about the applications sent in by us and about the already received positive replies.

Vasiliy Konstantinovich was sitting behind the table in the dining room and, without interrupting, heard me out and, when I had "laid out everything," he suddenly said calmly: "You will not go anyplace."

Lord, how had I dared? By what right? I was seized with shame for the request and bitterness for my collapsed hopes and God knows what in my heart.... How could I hold back the tears? I probably looked like one of those fish in the native skiff, glistening in its young aspirations for the light, for study in the unknown and distant lands....

In mid-July, Vasiliy Konstantinovich wrote me: "Grafa! Today is a good day. Today was my arrival in Khabarovsk and my going to work brought me a short and unexpected encounter with you.... But today it was pleasant, and if you wished, joyous to see you and one would hope that this is a good omen.... The 16 days spent out of Khabarovsk were full of intense, lively and great out-of-the office work. During these days I only slept 3 or 4 hours a night. Of course, I am hellishly tired, but I am content with the work and feel good. I felt the fatigue only here in Khabarovsk. Your director, Prof Kogan, who accompanied me on the trip also found things unusual and I brought him a lot of trouble on the trip. I got too much sun on the first couple of days and took ill. I endured the trip only due to his treatment.... I am sending you a book about the time of Stenka Razin and it provides a good picture of the economic and domestic relations in those times.... I am hoping that during these days of rest you will not refuse to call on us and catch me up. For me, this would be a great reward for the bestial stress which I endured during these days. A warm greeting. V.K." And then, "the schedule of the workday has been changed. For this reason I will be home in the evening and I will try out my new car. If you have the time, come and see us. Greetings and again greetings. V.K."

I told my mother each time I visited Vasiliy Konstantinovich and asked her permission. In our family concern over this simply did not arise as my parents were confident that their children would not behave unseemly and we felt this trust and justified it.

No one saw the letters from Vasiliy Konstantinovich to me or knew about them, I did not share them with anyone and they were just for me. And when he asked for me to "run over" in the aim of going out of town to try out the new car (a light blue Buick limousine), mother said:

"You will certainly visit the house of Blyukher? Father is unhappy with your late returns home, he is dubious and keeps saying: of what interest could you be to him?"

And I myself did not know....

With Vasiliy Konstantinovich and his new car we set off toward the Amur Flotilla and there the car in turning became stuck in a ditch with its front and rear right wheels and we could not free it. Vasiliy Konstantinovich stopped the engine, left a small light burning and we in the already dark night started walking around 12 km. Thunder was gathering and the rain had started, and Vasiliy Konstantinovich put his civilian jacket on my shoulders, with us walking along the road, to the left by the roadside brush.

A little time later, a vehicle dashed down the highway and then another. Blyukher said:

"They are already looking for us."

"We should have stopped it. What will happen to me at home? When will I get home?" I thought with alarm. A heavy rain caught us at the house of Vasiliy Konstantinovich. Anna Vasilyevna greeted us. Nodding reproachfully, she said:

"Well, we managed the phone calls!"

"Mother, you knew where we were and our car got stuck. Please make us some tea."

It was the middle of the night. I stayed over. I was given a sofa in the corner room which was then Blyukher's office.

On the eve of the holiday of Navy Day, on the last Sunday of July, in the evening everything was as it had been before. The very air seemed heavy with human warmth. We were drinking tea in the dining room. Seva and Nina were telling about their school affairs, they were listening to records and there was no sense of coming changes. Then Vasiliy Konstantinovich stood up, came up to me with the words: "Well, it is time for us to have a talk, let us go in the next room...." This was a large bright room, with two windows in each of the corner walls. At the entrance on the left against the interior solid wall stood a small sofa covered in a gray mottled material and behind it against the wall was a chair. I sat down in the left corner of the sofa and suddenly felt strange, a sense of alarm. I suddenly felt like squeezing further back into the corner of the sofa.

Vasiliy Konstantinovich moved the chair closer to me and began speaking. He spoke of numerous human affairs, about relations between people, about friendship between them, about love and our relations. He spoke for a long time, without hurrying, and his words struck your soul, your mind and your heart. Then he stood up and so did I. In beckoning me to him, he put his arms around me and without taking his eyes off mine, he said:

"I know that I will pay dearly for my love, my enemies will take advantage of this, but I can survive but can your young shoulders bear this?"

We went back into the dining room. Blyukher started up the record player which stood on the dining table. I stopped at the sill, leaning against the door. As in a fog, the sounds of a song performed by Vertinskiy drifted to me...."Magnolia of tropical azure—do you love me?" Coming up to me, Vasiliy Konstantinovich asked somewhat strictly:

"And do you love me?"

Shaken, I did not answer, I could not. Clearly words were no longer necessary. He knew everything. He understood everything. He saw everything. And he decided everything. For himself and for me. And perhaps, recalling that amazing day of ours, I find closest and most touching the words of Tergenev about Insarov from the novel "Nakanune" [On the Eve]: "...He stood fixed, he surrounded in his strong embrace this young woman who had given her life to him, he felt on his chest that new, infinitely dear burden; a feeling of tender emotion. A feeling of nobility inexplicably shattered his hard soul and never-known tears welled in his eyes.... But she did not cry...."

In escorting me home, Vasiliy Konstantinovich said:

"Tell your elders that I will come see them tomorrow and myself will explain everything."

And he did come. He was dressed in a black suit, a snow-white shirt, in black polished boots, in a black cap with a polished beak. He did not bring with him into our house either a sense of self-importance or awkwardness for my parents. Mother busied herself making tea, they spoke a little bit and then Vasiliy Konstantinovich began the conversation about me with the words:

"Has she been a good daughter."

Papa replied:

"Yes, but recently she has behaved badly. Before you did not have to look at the clock if Grafa had come it was 9:30 and now..."

"You go off and walk a bit, and we will talk," Vasiliy Konstantinovich told me. When I arrived, Anatoliy was not at the house and my parents were looking somewhat confused and depressed. Upon Blyukher's proposal, we drove home to get something in order to then go back. I remained alone in the car in the courtyard. Vasiliy Konstantinovich got out, he came back with a suitcase and we set off. In a turn of the road beyond the garden the car—again!—was stuck in the ditch—and again!—with its right wheels, as the first time. Blyukher himself was driving.

We came back. The door was opened by Anna Vasilyevna.

"Now a greeting, mama!" said Vasiliy Konstantinovich
Anna Vasilyevna came up, blessed me and kissed me.
Suddenly, I burst into tears.

"And what sort of wedding will we have?" asked Vasiliy Konstantinovich somewhat later.

"Wedding? Us?..."

"What sort of wedding will you choose? National or international?" Vasiliy Konstantinovich asked again and explained:

"With a national wedding there will be only your relatives and near friends and with an international one it will be a broader group of people."

We chose a "national" one. The wedding feast was without any claim at being chic but for the first time in my life I had been given an enormous bouquet of white chrysanthemums. This was all the more unusual as in those remote times the inhabitants of Khabarovsk did not even think about flowers in their lives. There could be no question of flowers. The region was living through a difficult period of development and people made do as they could. There was not enough food and rationing had been introduced. In the summer there were masses of field and forest flowers, particularly lilies, but these were not used. Early in the spring we pulled up ledum, put it in water and 10 days later the bouquets were on the table. But that was later, after my marriage.

Soon thereafter, painlessly for me and my family, the first letter of my nickname Grafa was dropped. And Rafa remained my nickname all my life.

Later, in recalling our past, my husband said with a gentle smile:

"Do you know when I saw you for the first time I thought to myself: there is my destiny."

And it probably was because he was my destiny....

Not long before the explanation, on the wall of the small angular room which then served Vasiliy Konstantinovich as his office, there appeared a stork of amazing beauty standing on one leg with a piece of grass in its beak. Embroidered on red canvas and framed above and below with broad bands of rich green color literally sewn with gold coins overlapping one another—this was a panel of work by Chinese or Japanese masters.

In August 1932, Vasiliy Konstantinovich went to visit the Transbaykal Troop Group and Seva, Nina and I went to the Molokovka Vacation Home near Chita.

...Some 42 years later, on 6 August 1974, a man phoned and in a muffled, slightly hoarse voice asked for Glafira Lukinichna. Unconfidently and somewhat confusedly he said:

"I am a driver, I drove you a long time ago, in Chita, at the request of the commander."

"In Chita?"

"Yes, a long time ago."

"But I was not in Chita," I replied. In my mind I guessed that he was confused, that in 1922, Vasiliy Konstantinovich had lived in Chita with his first family and he now had mistaken me for Galina Pavlovna.

The caller quite perplexedly said:

"Well, I still drove you in the Packhard...."

We were both silent.

"But were you called Grafa then?" asked the voice.

"Yes, I was," I said, now taking heart.

"And do you remember Molokovka?"

"Good Lord, of course. That was in the summer of 1932!"

"You were so young and so beautiful. We drove from Molokovka, do you remember the Ingoda River and the ferry across it? I was driving to get you, and you had left earlier and we met on the ferry, you had been traveling in a cart (goodness, what a cart! Well, it made it....)"

The voice belonged to the driver Mikhail Romanovich, he mentioned many names well known to me, including the commander of the Transbaykal Troop Group, Comrade Gorbachev, and places. And I recalled what I had already forgotten: after my marriage and precisely before the trip to the Transbaykal, I asked my husband not to call me wife (!?) as for me the words "husband" and "wife" were awkward, and my heart felt constricted by these new, uncustomary but what were suddenly obligatory words. I remember well that summer, those feelings, Molokovka, Seva and Nina, and myself in my white voile dress meeting my husband by the porch when he and his comrades after the completed troop affairs arrived on horseback, those cold mornings with the frozen water in the washstands, the approaching days of the amazing Far Eastern autumn and the whispering of the tops of the old trees in the forest.

They were golden days, the last days of summer, and during the day all of us vacationers, with the exception of Vasiliy Konstantinovich got suntanned and took sunbaths....

And again Chita, the return to Khabarovsk, and Seva asking me along the road home in the car:

"Will you live with us?"

"Yes."

"Really?"

"Yes. Do you want this?"

"Yes. I am glad. Very," said Seva and leaned trustingly up against me.

It was Seva, the young boy, who 40 years later would say to me here, in Moscow, after our return from Rybinsk, from the homeland of Vasiliy Konstantinovich, from the national unarmed self-defense tournament:

"Too much links us together."

Those were the words of Seva who through our subsequent life without Blyukher carried an attachment and loyalty to our family, to his family, to the family of his father. Seva who would defend his motherland in the ranks of the 65th Army under the command of Pavel Ivanovich Batov, a fellow countryman of Vasiliy Konstantinovich, and who for excellence in the Great Patriotic War would be awarded the Order of the Combat Red Banner. Seva, who in his letter to me in the Kazakhstan camp of 12 September 1945 wrote: "All the pictures of our family life which you have mentioned in your letter I remember very well. I have merely to close my eyes and much of the past returns with amazing clarity.... I remember in one of the heated battles I was firing with direct laying at the Fritzes. Each shell that I got off (each tracer which marked their group and at that time I got off 387 rounds continuously!) brought me an indescribable satisfaction, for I knew for whom and for what I was sending these presents. Each shell contained a damning of the enemies of our motherland, the enemies of our family life."²

Footnotes

1. V.V. Dushenkin, "Ot soldata do marshala" [From Soldier to Marshal], Moscow, Politizdat, 3d Supplemented and Revised Edition, 1964, p 162.

2. Letters from Vsevolod Blyukher kept in my personal archives.

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